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竹姫
BURAI
COMICS

Love Beyond Time - Volume 1
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IN THE DISTANT PAST, IN A NORTHERN VILLAGE FAR FROM THE CAPITAL.
TONIGHT IS THE ANNUAL VILLAGE FESTIVAL.
What do you think?
Does this outfit suit me?
You look beautiful, Setona.
It really suits you.
Thanks, Sis.
Now, remember. Act gracefully. There will be no fighting or hunting, understood?
APPREHENSION
Arrrg.
I'm going to head over to Manibe's place now.
I... I know that!
BORN FROM A FAMILY OF WARRIORS...
...I HAVE CONFIDENCE IN MY ABILITY TO BOTH HUNT AND FIGHT. BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY...
...I WANT TO HURRY AND SHOW THIS TO HIM! I CAN'T WAIT UNTIL THE FESTIVAL STARTS.

PROLOGUE
THE START OF AN ENDLESS JOURNEY

It's rare to see you dressed like this.
NERVOUS
TH-THUMP
Do I look strange?
Really? Thank goodness!
You don't know how terrible it was!
Oh? How so?
KISS
No... you look so beautiful that it sent shivers down my spine.
"You mustn't take big steps. You mustn't run."
My sister kept nagging me over and over again.
This is really hard to move in, too.
Ha ha ha...
What is it?
Ah, but...
If it pleases you, then it was all worth it.

My strong and lovely Setona.
Just you standing there...
... enchants me.
Oh, Manibe.
Even when you are swinging a sword, or shooting an arrow, you remain beautiful in my eyes.
I... I feel the same way.
You're the only one I see.
I'm happy just to see you smile.
It must be regarding the festival prepa-rations.
Under-stood.
The Village Elder has called for you.
Manibe!

☐ *Love Beyond Time* ☐
Free Talk Corner

Hello, nice to meet you! Thank you so much for picking up ***Love Beyond Time***! This series ran weekly from May 2009 to around the end of January 2010 in the magazine, Joushi Jiml. It was around this time that the manga publishing company, Shobunkan, decided to compile my serial and publish it as comic books. It was like a dream come true to have both volumes scheduled to go on sale at the same time.
Even as I'm writing this now, I'm filled with happiness!

I consider this manga to be my first comic book series. Not to mention, my first weekly magazine serial! With the support of many, it took about a year, of constant headaches and waves of angry frustration, to write. In those days, I spent every second of every day thinking about nothing but ***Love Beyond Time***. It hasn't even been a year since I've finished writing it, but I feel as if it all happened so long ago...

Looking back at it now, the art and story were still raw, the story's development too fast, and there were many unnecessary elements added. Still, at that time, I really tried my best to write this story well. Many things happened, but I really had a lot of fun writing it! In the next Free Talk, I'll be talking about a lot more things. Please read till the end!

~Chikuhime

Yes.
He had decided long before, to leave the village during the night of the festival.
You were entrusted to my care.
Manibe ...
... WOULD BE THE LAST I WOULD EVER SEE.
...left the village?
SOMETHING IS NOT RIGHT.
That can't be.
Manibe would never leave without telling me...
That man was not originally from this village.
Then please tell me, Village Elder...
WAIT...
It would be best to forget about him and enjoy the festival.

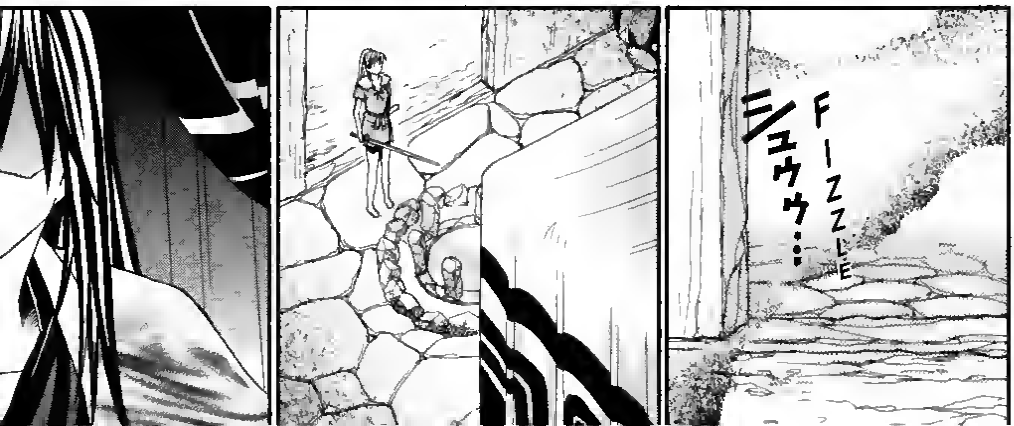
Why is the smell of blood at this festival?
...
As expected from the daughter of a warrior.
I suppose there is no use in hiding it any longer.
Since ancient times, there has been a secret ceremony in our village.
STOMP
STOMP
STOMP
Every fifty years, a sacrifice is offered to the god of our mountain.
STOMP
STOMP
It is said that should we fail to bring a sacrifice to the shrine entrance before the start of the annual night festival ...
...a catastrophe would befall our village.

Over there!
This year marks the fiftieth year... and Manibe has been chosen to be the sacrifice.
That must be the shrine!
No other choice?!
Then, I...
There was no other choice.
It is the only way to protect our village from destruction.
It is better to choose those who will leave the least behind.
He was a man without family or children.
Then, was Manibe chosen because he was an outsider?!

CRUMBLE
CLIMB
...WILL GO SEE WITH MY OWN EYES JUST WHAT KIND OF "GOD" STOLE MANIBE FROM ME!
HUFF
HUFF
CLIMB
Ah!
Blood ...
KA-CHINK
No...
THAT MUST BE...
...WHERE MANIBE WAS KILLED.

Uwaaaa!
BAM
SHATTER
Give Manibe back to me! Show yourself!
Hey! You hear me, mountain god?!

FWSHHH
!!
CRACK
RUMBLE
WHAT IN THE WORLD?!


FIZZLE

You!
Are *you* the god of this mountain?!

Are you the god...
...who stole Manibe from me?!
Answer me!
You're too loud.
What?!
CLATTER
Unfortunately, I am not the god you seek.
Rather...

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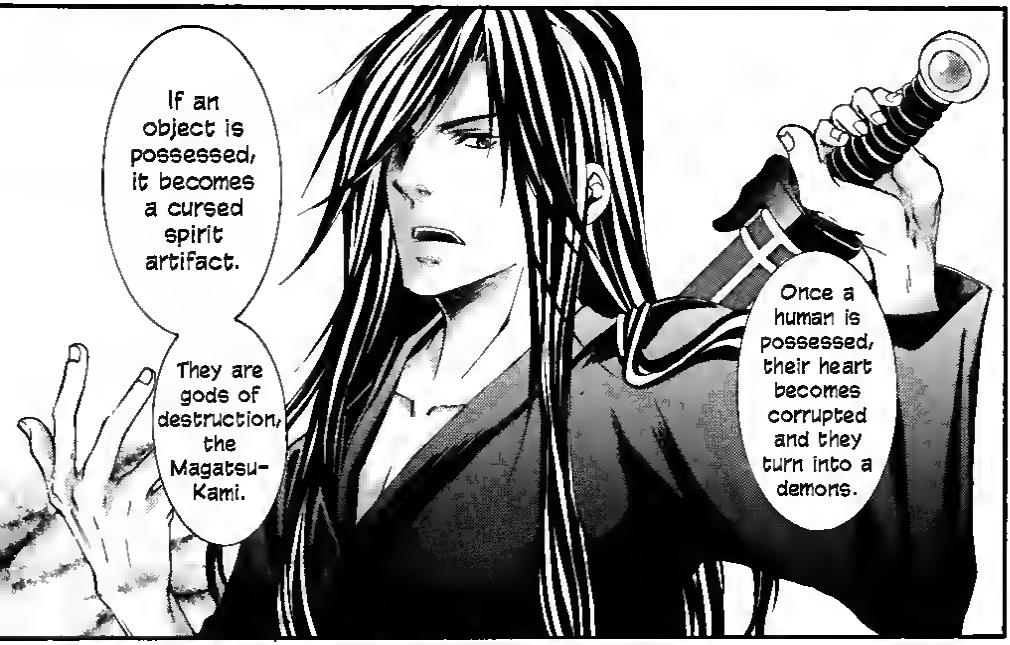
Love Beyond Time

Prologue: The Start of an Endless Journey Part 2

That was what you people call gods.
What... was that?!
FIZZLE
Screech


If an object is possessed, it becomes a cursed spirit artifact.
They are gods of destruction, the Magatsu-Kami.
Once a human is possessed, their heart becomes corrupted and they turn into a demons.

When I saw the pool of blood, I was filled with rage!
... wanted to see Manibe at any costs.
I...
MANIBE WAS SACRIFICED TO THOSE...
The Maga-tsu-Kami ...
The seal loosened when the mirror was broken, which enabled them to escape.

I didn't care if it was just his corpse.
I wanted to take him back from the gods who stole him from me!
Don't be ridiculous.
CHUCKLE
Even should you wish to wait a hundred, two hundred years for his reincarnation, a human's life is not eternal.
It's useless.
By now, his body has already been devoured at the bottom of the well.
His soul is probably wandering aimlessly, together with the Magatsu-Kami.
I can't simply give up!
I can't ...
...

He was just here with me.
He told me, "See you later."
HIS SMILING FACE, HIS VOICE, HIS WARM EMBRACE...
EVERYTHING... I CAN STILL REMEMBER *EVERYTHING* SO CLEARLY!
I can't just give him up!
...
Then, do you want to try searching for him?
What?

IMMORTALITY...
Can you...
...do something like that?
Do you want to gain immortality ...
...and search for that man's reincarnation?
?!
SWISH
What are you-?
SLICE

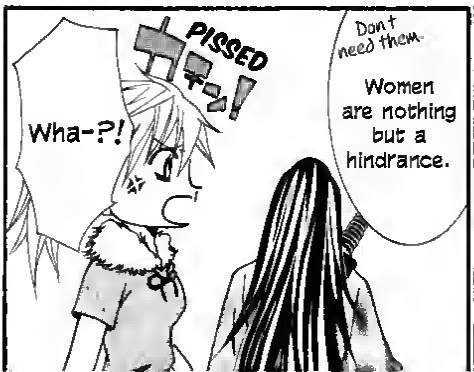
!!
DRIP
DRIP
To stand guard against the Magatsu-Kami, I became an immortal.
By drinking this blood, others can also gain immortality.
This is the blood of immortality.
TH-THUMP
BUT...
I...
TH-THUMP
I've decided.
TH-THUMP
!
TH-THUMP
IS HE TELLING ME THE TRUTH?
The choice is yours.
What will it be?

Please, give me your blood!
...
COLLAPSE
I STILL WANT TO BE WITH MANIBE!
...so easily blinded by such fleeting emotions.
Humans are such simple creatures ...

Feelings like love are mere illusions in the face of immortality.
Once they are gone, all that is left is the endless boredom of existence... that's all.
I see you have awoken.
Where are you going?
I am going to look for the scattered Magatsu-Kami.
I no longer sense their presence in this area.
Really?
Then that must mean my village is safe.
Perhaps.
Thank goodness.
Sis...

Say...
...would you mind if I went with you, to exterminate the Magatsu-Kami?
What?

The one who broke the mirror, was me.
If Manibe's soul escaped with the Magatsu-Kami, I might be able to find clues if I chase after them.


PISSED
Don't need them.
Women are nothing but a hindrance.
Wha-?!

I CAME HERE WITHOUT TELLING HER ANYTHING.
I feel sorry for the two children left behind.
After their father, now their mother.
Look this way, Setona.
It will be all right.
You still have me. It's not weakness to cry when you are sad.
THERE WAS ONLY THE TWO OF US LEFT. SHE ALWAYS TOOK CARE OF ME.

Don't ...
GRIP
Don't look down on me!
I'm confident in my sword fighting!
Besides ...
...even if only from a distance, I want to be able to protect my sister from danger.
...
Hey, you...
SCREECH
I understand. So, please, cease your screeching!
My name is not, "Hey you"! It's "Setona"!
Huh?
Ordinary swords have no effect on the Magatsu-Kami.
SWOOSH ...

It is a sword created to slay the Magatsu-Kami.
Use that.
CATCH
Whoa!
You may call me Rai.
You seem like a strong woman, Setona... I don't think I'll be bored for a while.

...AND STARTED ON MY ENDLESS JOURNEY.
They're here, Setona!

Was that supposed to be a compliment?
THAT WAS HOW I FIRST MET RAI...
Hey, Rai...

CHAPTER 1
Lord Tadamitsu is mine!
I won't forgive ...
I won't forgive you!
Eeek!

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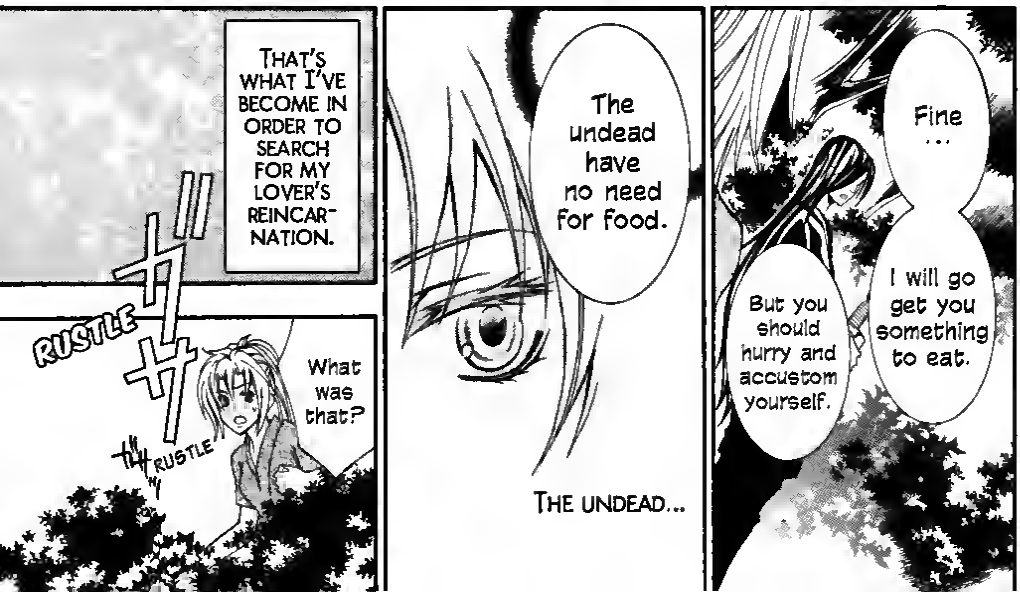
Love Beyond Time

Chapter one: Izutsu's Love — Part 1

...should I be able to move as fast as this?!
SLASH
ROLL
FIZZLE
I STARTED ON A TIMELESS JOURNEY TOGETHER WITH RAI, THE IMMORTAL WATCHMAN OVER THE MAGATSU-KAMI...
...GODS OF DESTRUC-TION CAPABLE OF POSSESS-ING BOTH OBJECTS AND HUMANS.
SIZZLE
You're such a slave driver, Rai.
All you do is work me to the bone.
Here.
...


Fine ...
I will go get you something to eat.
But you should hurry and accustom yourself.
The undead have no need for food.
THE UNDEAD...
THAT'S WHAT I'VE BECOME IN ORDER TO SEARCH FOR MY LOVER'S REINCAR-NATION.
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
What was that?

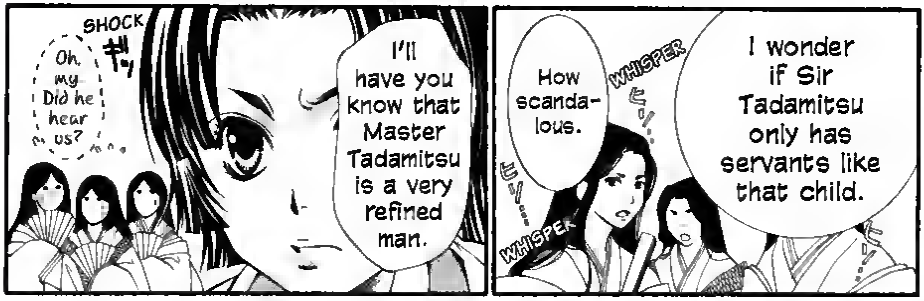
Ow...
A CHILD?
If it's a wild dog, I don't have the energy to fight it.
PEEK
!
...
IGNORE
You all right? Are you hurt?
Hey, kid.
So, you fell.
I just... lost my footing a bit on the way.
I'd like to help you, but I currently don't have the energy.
EXHAUSTED
I'm in the middle of running an important errand for my master!
Of course not!
Why are you by yourself?
Did you get separated from your friends?
FLINCH
NO

☐ Prologue: Rai and Setona

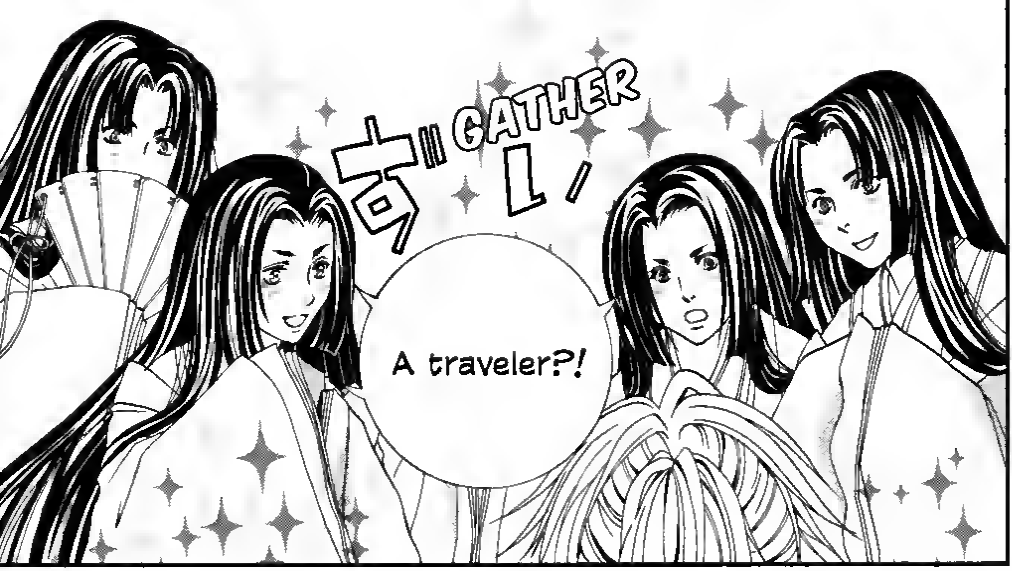
I originally planned to write ***Love Beyond Time*** as a horror piece. During the time I was drawing up the story, I had started to enjoy the period works I was writing under my pen name, Eika Tachibana, and decided to add a bit of that feeling into ***Love Beyond Time***. Personally, I prefer the subtlety of Japanese folklore over historical period dramas, though ultimately the story ended up with the main protagonists traveling through various historical periods as the undead. My intended aim was also to clearly depict the various historical periods while ignoring historical accuracy, but from the latter half of the story, I couldn't help but try to make it more realistic (laughs).

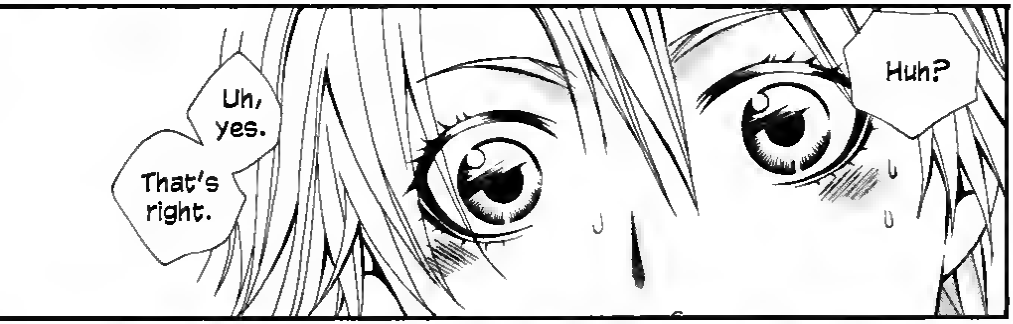
In the prologue, the village "somewhere in the northern regions," (laughs) supposedly existed in a time a little before the Heian era, and had its own unique culture and beliefs. I took the name "Setona" from a character in ***The Legend of Marimo***. As for Rai, I chose that name because in the Ainu language, Rai means death. An undead man who holds the name of death. A man who lives a life where he's alive, yet dead. As you are probably aware, there's already a relatively large trend in writing about such people (laughs). Setona, on the other hand, is full of vitality I wanted to write about a journey with two people of such contrasting characters.

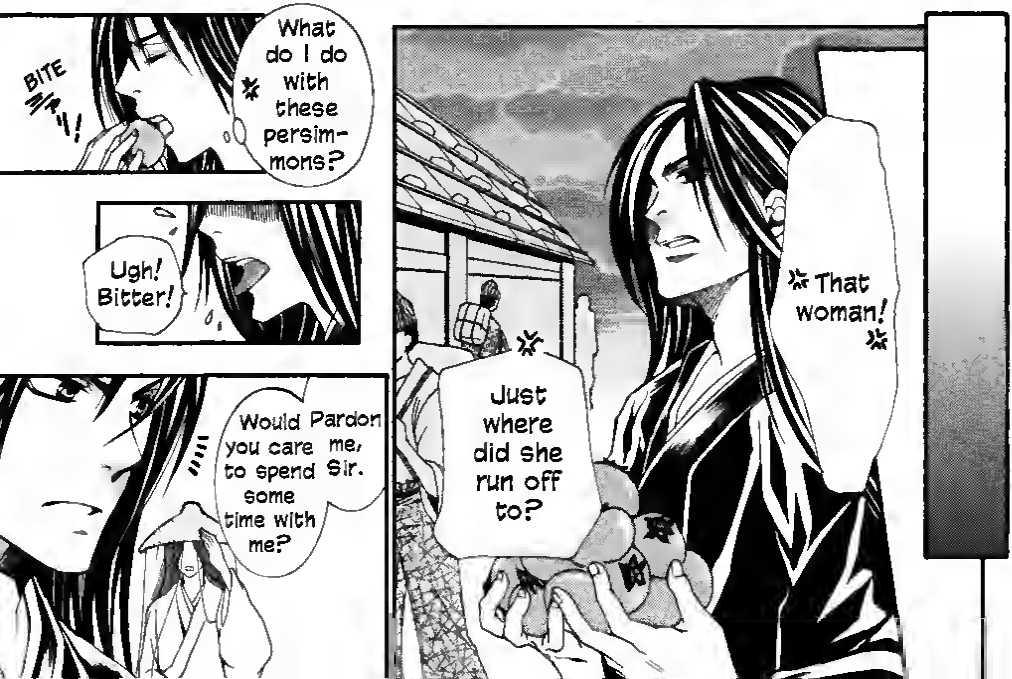
I have come to deliver this letter, My Lady.
Thank you. I shall give my reply later.
Under-stood.


I wonder if Sir Tadamitsu only has servants like that child.
WHISPER
How scanda-lous.
WHISPER
I'll have you know that Master Tadamitsu is a very refined man.
SHOCK
Oh, my Did he hear us?

If you will please excuse me.
Excuse me, Miss.
Are you also from Sir Tadamitsu's residence?
No.
I'm just a passing traveler.
I came without thinking


GATHER
A traveler?!


Huh?
Uh, yes.
That's right.


BITE
What do I do with these persim-mons?
Ugh! Bitter!
Would you care to spend some time with me?
Pardon me, Sir.
That woman!
Just where did she run off to?

A PROSTITUTE?
Sorry, but I'm in a hurry.
Quite the boorish man, aren't you?
To walk through these parts at this time of night and not partake in it's secret pleasures.
Have you not heard of the song, "Was I Born to Play or to Flirt?"
Encountering such a beautiful and willing flower happens only once in a lifetime.
BZZ
BZZ
You...
Master!
THIS MAN...

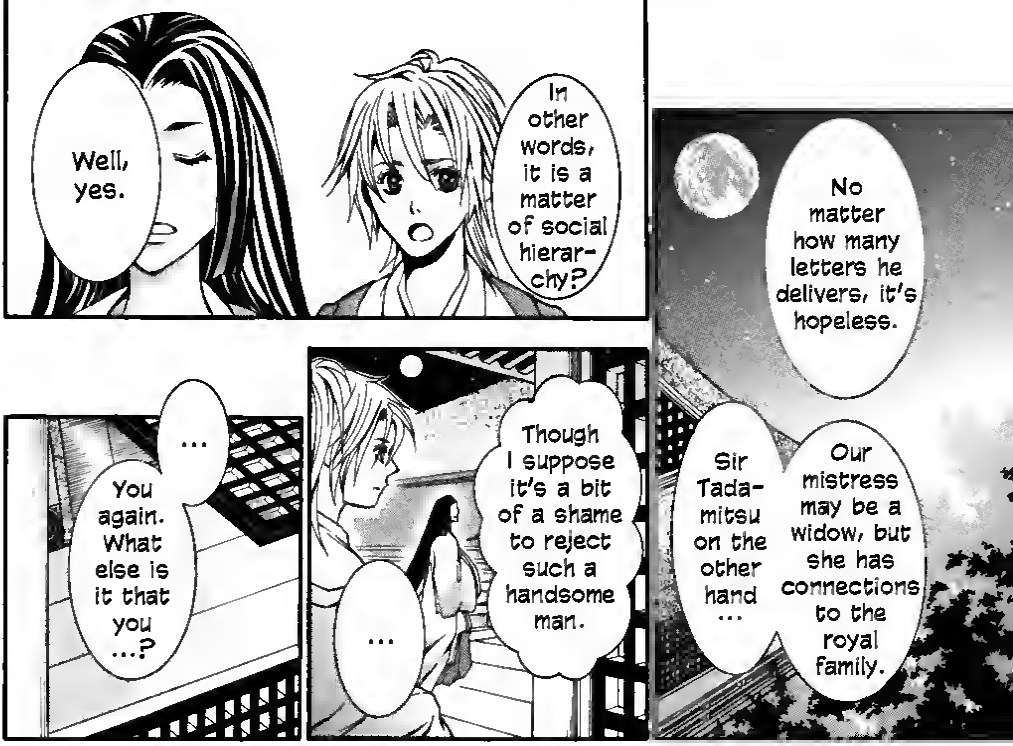
Yes.
About Master's letter...
I see.
Ah, Kureha.
You have returned.
I did not expect to receive a reply.
...
It is fine.
Shall I call on a dancer, or...
Now then.
Let us go enjoy ourselves tonight.
Wait.
Yes?
Do you care to join us?
No, that's not it.
THE SWORD IS GIVING OFF A STRONG REACTION.
I sense the presence of something unearthly around you.
!!

Are you perhaps a shaman, Sir?
How interesting.
Beautiful, isn't it?
Nothing less than expected from a top class courtesan.
...
Unfortunately, the ones who favor my performance hall...
...are not only beautiful women, it seems.
Once night falls...
...a demon appears and assaults the women.

I would much appreciate it if you could exorcise it, Sir Shaman.
...
Only if it's one of the ones I've been searching for.
Wow! ♡
I'm stuffed! ♡
THAT REALLY SURPRISED ME.
PHEW
What places have you traveled to?!
Give us all the details!
But, I...
Don't worry! We've already prepared you a room!
IS A FEMALE TRAVELER RARE?
They even lent me a kimono!
This place is so big...
SPACE
SPACE

No, wait!
Please, stop!
HEY, THAT'S...
RIP
RIP

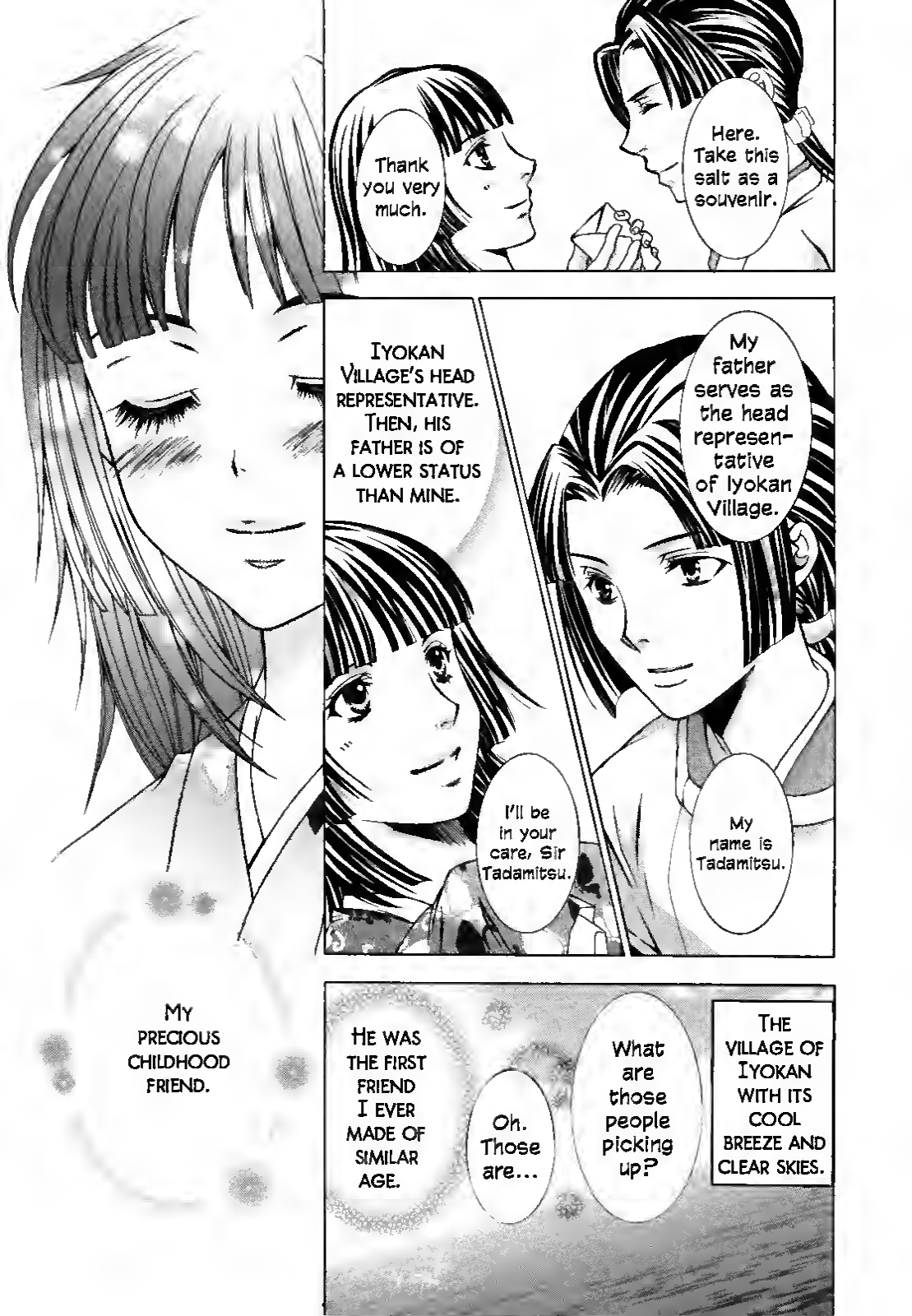
...THE LETTER FROM THAT BOY!
Did you...
...even read it?
You are...?
HOW COULD SHE JUST RIP IT UP LIKE THAT?!
Pardon my intrusion!
What are you doing?!
PATTER
PATTER
Haven't I warned you not to approach My Lady's private quarters?!
PULL
But...
That letter was from that child, Kureha.
...who has come to our residence to learn proper etiquette.
My sincere apologies, My Lady. This person here is a distant relative of mine...


Well, yes.
In other words, it is a matter of social hierarchy?
No matter how many letters he delivers, it's hopeless.
Sir Tadamitsu on the other hand ...
Our mistress may be a widow, but she has connections to the royal family.
...
You again. What else is it that you ...?
...
Though I suppose it's a bit of a shame to reject such a handsome man.
SHE KNOWS!
Their gossiping and curiosity have gone too far.
How dare the servants sneak a stranger into my residence.

CHAPTER ONE
IZUTSU'S LOVE
PART ②

I am on...
...a journey searching for my lover. We became separated long ago.
I MAY JUST BE MEDDLING, BUT...
Having sent all those letters, I believe his feelings are genuine.
Won't you at least inform him that you have read them?
...
That's unnecessary.
A JOURNEY, WAS IT?
I TOO HAD ONCE GONE ON A JOURNEY IN THE PAST.
ONLY ONCE.
Granny, look!
What is that? What are they doing?
WHEEZE
Young Lady, stop!
Your granny's legs cannot keep up.
WHEEZE
STEP
Oh, no.
Was granny left behind?
EVERYTHING ABOUT MY FATHER'S NEW POST AS HEAD OF IYOKAN VILLAGE WAS NEW AND FRESH.

They are making moshio, seaweed salt.
By pouring seawater in the buckets and heating the seaweed in them, salt is produced.
Would you like to try some?
How is it?
It's salty.
The cute princess from the capital is the talk of the town.
Oh, my.
Quite the honest one, aren't you?
Ha Ha Ha!
Princess of Iyokan Village.
Do you know me?


Here. Take this salt as a souvenir.
Thank you very much.
My father serves as the head representative of Iyokan Village.
IYOKAN VILLAGE'S HEAD REPRESENTATIVE. THEN, HIS FATHER IS OF A LOWER STATUS THAN MINE.
My name is Tadamitsu.
I'll be in your care, Sir Tadamitsu.
THE VILLAGE OF IYOKAN WITH ITS COOL BREEZE AND CLEAR SKIES.
What are those people picking up?
Oh. Those are...
HE WAS THE FIRST FRIEND I EVER MADE OF SIMILAR AGE.
MY PRECIOUS CHILDHOOD FRIEND.

SINCE THEN, TWO YEARS HAVE QUICKLY GONE BY.
Are you reading a story?
The wooden frame of the well... I was shorter than the frame when we last compared our heights, but I have outgrown it in your absence...
Would you like to read it with me?
No, I...
Yes. A story of two childhood friends who were always playing around a well.
The boy eventually grew taller and became a fine man. This was part of the song he composed for the girl upon proposing marriage.
Ah, yes. Of course. You are not yet at an age to enjoy such stories.
You are, after all, three years younger than I.
I'm only two years younger.
I simply find reality more interesting than fantasy.
GRAB
!?!!

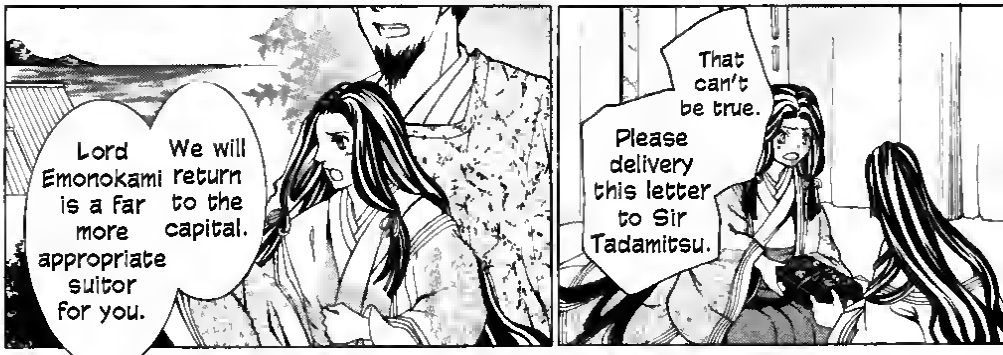
FLUTTER
Tadamitsu?
At the start of the new year, I shall go through the ceremony of adulthood.
Once I officially become a man, I wish to have your hand in marriage... My Princess.
Oh, Tadamitsu.
...
...Kirako.
What?
Please call me Kirako.
Outside of my own family, the only one I shall give my true name to will be you.
Kira... ko.
To give one's true name...

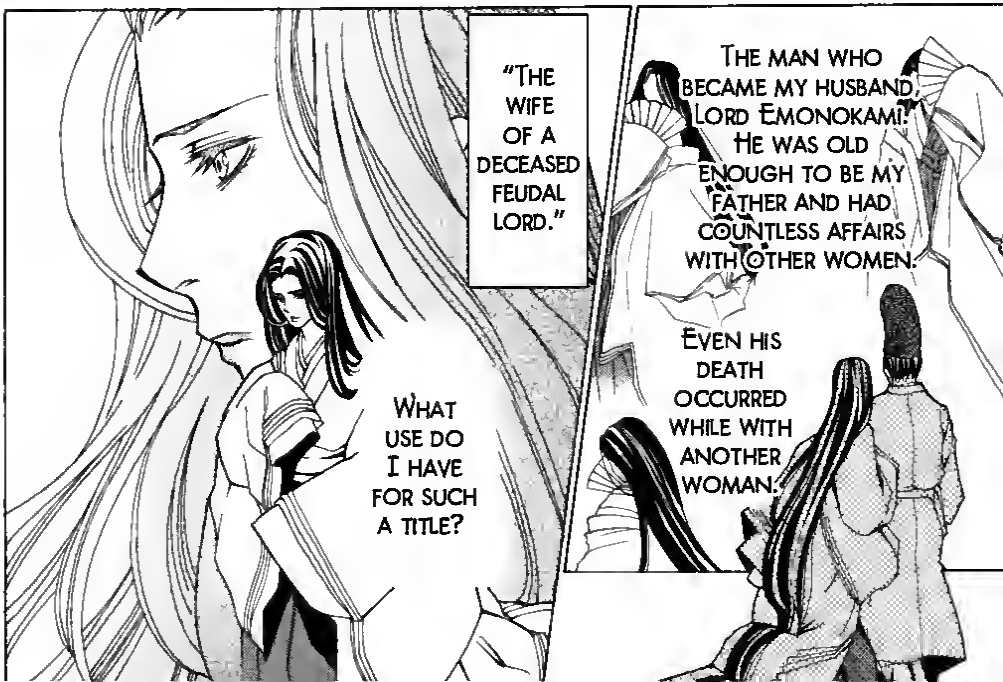
My Lady ...
...are you all right?
GASP!
I LOVE YOU.
...IS TO GIVE ONE'S TRUE HEART.
I love you, Tadamitsu.

Please leave.
What?
...
Is something the matter?

THE PAST I HAD FORGOTTEN.
What I do with my letters is none of your concern. Please leave at once.
THE PAST I HAD LOCKED AWAY DEEP INSIDE MY HEART.
If you refuse to leave, I shall summon the law officers!
My Lady...
SLAM
I DIDN'T WANT TO REMEMBER.
Why are you sending me these letters ... ...after all this time?
IT WAS YOU WHO CHOSE TO MAKE WHAT WE HAD A DISTANT MEMORY.
Tadamitsu ...

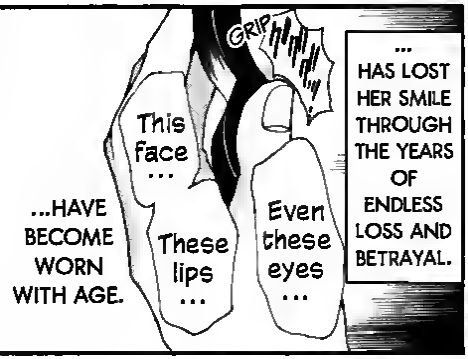
What?
If so, then I heard he has already taken a wife.
Are you referring to the son of Iyokan Village's head representative?
No, I refuse! The one to choose who I marry, Father ...
... should be myself!

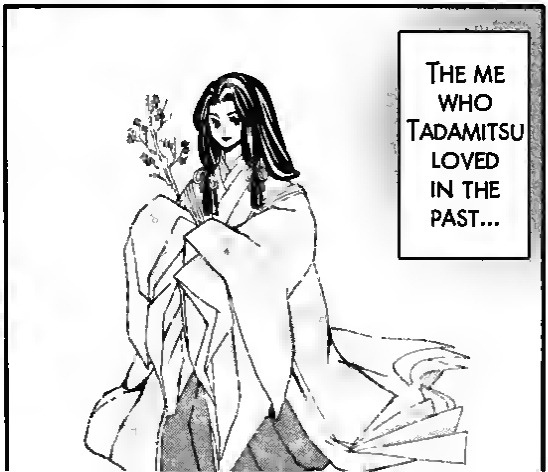

Lord Emonokami is a far more appropriate suitor for you.
We will return to the capital.
That can't be true.
Please delivery this letter to Sir Tadamitsu.


"THE WIFE OF A DECEASED FEUDAL LORD."
WHAT USE DO I HAVE FOR SUCH A TITLE?
THE MAN WHO BECAME MY HUSBAND, LORD EMONOKAMI. HE WAS OLD ENOUGH TO BE MY FATHER AND HAD COUNTLESS AFFAIRS WITH OTHER WOMEN.
EVEN HIS DEATH OCCURRED WHILE WITH ANOTHER WOMAN.

The contents of his letters have never changed.
SAYING, "I LOVE YOU," JUST AS IN THE PAST.
I THOUGHT I WOULD QUIETLY SUFFER ALONE FOR THE REMAINDER OF MY LIFE.

...have changed.
I...
BUT IT IS ALL MEANINGLESS.


GRIP
This face ...
These lips ...
Even these eyes ...
...HAVE BECOME WORN WITH AGE.
... HAS LOST HER SMILE THROUGH THE YEARS OF ENDLESS LOSS AND BETRAYAL.


THE ME WHO TADAMITSU LOVED IN THE PAST...

I WANT TO SEE YOU!
You are cruel!
Why come now to shake my heart after all this time?!
Tadamitsu!
I WANT TO SEE YOU!
BUT IT IS ALREADY TOO LATE!
I love you... and *despise* you!

SHE JUST SEEMED... TO BE IN SO MUCH PAIN.
I CAUSED HER TO RECALL PAINFUL MEMORIES.
I SHOULDN'T HAVE MEDDLED.
ISN'T THAT...
FLOAT
!
...a Magatsu-Kami?

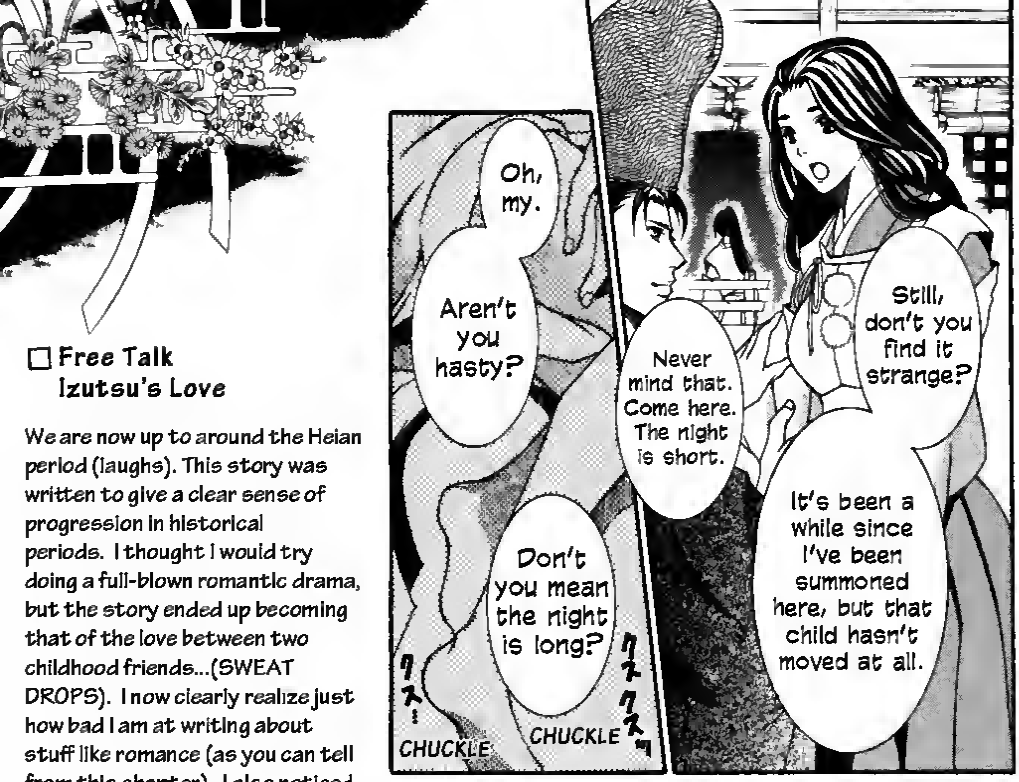
時遍路

Love Beyond Time

Chapter One: Izutsu's Love — Part 3

Kureha, right?
That's enough.
Master. I am against this!
Children have no need to worry about such matters.
They only need to do as they are told.
But!
I don't trust him of being capable of expelling the demon!
He does nothing but drink!
You don't need to concern yourself, Kureha.
We don't know anything about that man's background.
Now, Kureha.

A child's role is to retain purity, without suspicions.
It wasn't always like this.
You have no wife, yet surround yourself with small children.
My Lord has quite unique tastes.
I don't need many attendants either.
I find it more comfortable to remain single.
To fall for such a playboy, that princess has no eye for men.
Oh, dear.
However, her father opposed it.
Long ago, I had once proposed to a woman.

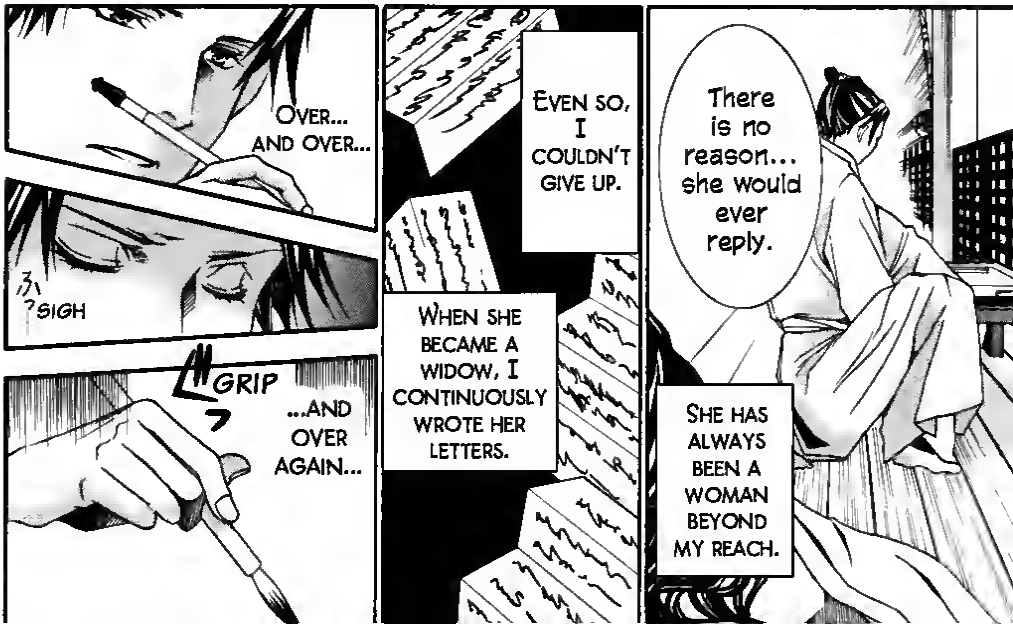

Oh, my.
Aren't you hasty?
Never mind that. Come here. The night is short.
Still, don't you find it strange?
It's been a while since I've been summoned here, but that child hasn't moved at all.
Don't you mean the night is long?
クス!
CHUCKLE
CHUCKLE
クスクス

☐ Free Talk
Izutsu's Love

We are now up to around the Heian period (laughs). This story was written to give a clear sense of progression in historical periods. I thought I would try doing a full-blown romantic drama, but the story ended up becoming that of the love between two childhood friends...(SWEAT DROPS). I now clearly realize just how bad I am at writing about stuff like romance (as you can tell from this chapter). I also noticed that there wasn't enough explanation provided when the Magatsu-Kami first possessed someone. Arrgh.
Writing like this, I can't help being filled with self-doubt.

Anyways, the scene where Karako thinks to herself ("Look at me!") was where she transformed into a demon of jealousy. Her face after looking in the mirror marked the opening of the last arc in the story and its climax
As for the ending, I wanted to give Kureha a happy life so the story ended the way it did. Izutsu's Love also set the relationship between Rai and Setona as that of master and servant.

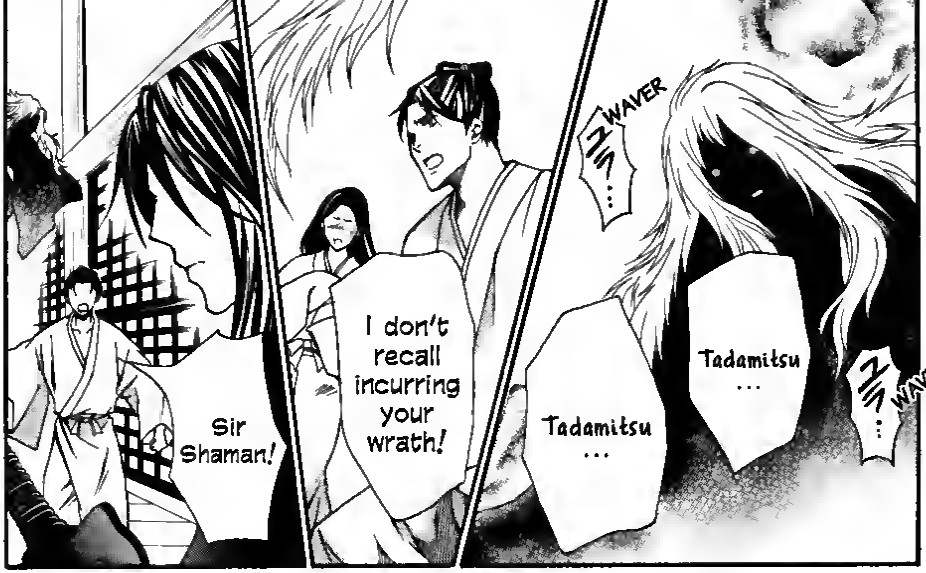
Kirako ...
I WAS ABLE TO CONVEY MY FEELINGS FEARLESSLY AND HONESTLY.
I UNDERSTAND NOW.
EVEN I HAD ONCE BEEN A CHILD WHO DIDN'T KNOW OF DOUBTS OR BETRAYAL.


OVER... AND OVER...
SIGH
GRIP
...AND OVER AGAIN...
EVEN SO, I COULDN'T GIVE UP.
WHEN SHE BECAME A WIDOW, I CONTINUOUSLY WROTE HER LETTERS.
There is no reason... she would ever reply.
SHE HAS ALWAYS BEEN A WOMAN BEYOND MY REACH.

Is something the matter?
What happened to your letter?
Nothing.
My Lord?
SPILL
SPREAD
I erased it.
SPREAD
I HAVE NO NEED FOR YOUR FACE...
My Lord?
...JUST YOUR BODY.

The Magatsu-Kami!
HUFF
HUFF
It entered that house.
Oh.
CREAK
For the face I see in my embrace...
...is always yours.

Excuse me.
THIS AFTER-NOON'S ...
You're that boy from earlier.
Is this the residence where you work?
That is correct.
Then, did you happen to see something that looks like a black mist come in here?
!
The demon has come!
DEMON?!
キャアー!!!
AAAHH!
You demon!
Why do you persist in haunting me?!


Sir Shaman!
I don't recall incurring your wrath!
Tadamitsu ...
WAVER
Tadamitsu ...
WAVER

What are you doing?! Why are you not destroying it?!
Dammit! Then, I'll ...
This is...

Urrghhh
ARRRghh
WOOOOOSHH
SLASH
What?
W-Wait!
RUN
Master!
Are you hurt?!
RUN
Oh!
Hey, Rai!
So it's you, Setona.

THE FACT THAT RAI'S HERE MEANS ...
Was that the Magatsu-Kami?
...
Where were you?
Oh, I... was treated to dinner at a house nearby. Various things happened and ...
Oh? Even after you made someone go fetch food for you?
Ah ha ha...
More... More importantly...
...that Magatsuki-Kami came from the house I was at!
I'm sure that was ...
... Karako.
But, why?

Karako!
Master!
Right!
Let's follow them.
WHY HAS KARAKO...
...BECOME A DEMON?

Forgive you...
I won't forgive you, Tadamitsu.
Karako!
Is it...
...really you?
Karako, wait!

I betrayed you?
Wait.
GRIND
Betraying me.
Then, shamelessly writing me those letters.
GRIND
GRAB
If you are referring to my sleeping around with other women...
...that was all to satisfy my desire for you.
Were you not the one who rejected me in the past?!
GUARRGH!

時遍路

Love Beyond Time

Chapter one: Izutsu's Love — Part 4

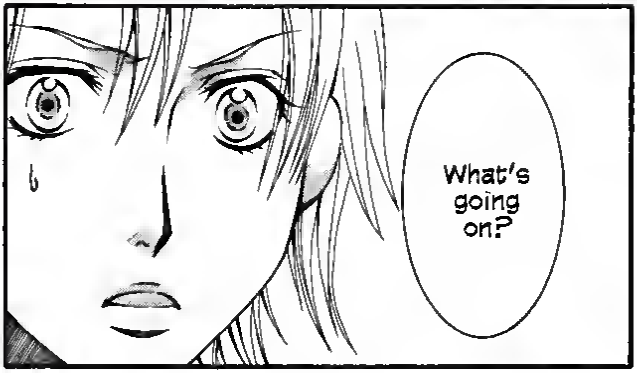
Master!
If you wish to punish me for those actions, then I shall accept.
Come, Karako! Bestow me my punishment!
1 INCH FORWARD
He's been captured by the demon.
I have no choice but to kill him as well.
!
SHE'S THAT LADY THE LETTERS MASTER ALWAYS WROTE TO...
Rai, wait! That person is...
It's too late.
SWISH
You can't!
STEP

No, Kureha!
Master!
SLITHER
Stay away!
SLICE

■ Short Comic ■

When writing Izutsu's Love, I often watched Juri's The Story of Genji to change my mood.
Watching on her PC
MEOW
You're heavy!
MEW MEW MEW
CREAK
CREAK
I often play Juri's CD, which has the theme song on it... when I felt like it.
PLOP
Go ahead. Lie over there. I can still hear it
A silent rebellion against the Manuscript.
(Ditching work) Fully Immersed
R-18
The criminal was you, Kamonryo!
BRAVO!
Fumio!
I had no idea whether it could be used as a reference for the manga, but at least my motivation's gone up!
Regarding the manga
You liked "AS," didn't you?
Hey wanna go to Juri's 60 year anniversary concert at Tokyo Dome?
What?
The one I liked was "Wild Ones"!
Mom

This is totally not a comic short. (SWEAT DROP)



I see ...
SIGH
?
That's what I've been looking for.
Then what about *that*?
The Magatsu-Kami was in the boy.
It slipped out of it's host so it wouldn't get cut.
FIZZLE

That's something only you can do.
Is there no way to save her?!
That is the manifestation of a scorned woman's wrath.
Moreover.
Should she continue to slip out of her physical form, she will most likely lose her life.
That's ...

I must go.
I shall leave Kureha in your care!
How is Kureha?
Don't worry. He's only lost consciousness.
That *demon* is attached to you, after all.
Hey, Rai.
Then, was your attempt to kill Sir Tadamitsu a ploy?
I figured if he was a truly faithful servant, then he wouldn't let his master be harmed.
A servant, huh?
This sword was made to defeat those *demons*.
It responded to the boy.
Did you know from the start?
That the Magatsu-Kami had possessed the boy?
No.

Rai... this child...
Did you have a terrible nightmare?
Are you all right?!
My Lady!
I SAW THAT "DREAM" COUNTLESS TIMES.
No one is to come near here tonight!
I'm fine.
Everyone, please leave.
My Lady!

WHENEVER I AWOKE, MY BODY FELT HEAVY.
WERE THOSE REALLY DREAMS? THEY FELT SO RAW.
BANG!
Who is it?
Did you not understand when I gave the order not to approach here?
No, I did not.
You are free to hate or kill me.
But before that, I want you to tell me the reason.
Tadamitsu!

Tadamitsu.
Please! Don't run away!
CLATTER
Karako!
I should have done this sooner.
KILL HIM? THEN THAT DREAM REALLY WAS...
I refuse.
You suddenly disappeared from me in the past.
Release me!
Please, let me go!
I *refuse* to let that happen again.
I should have come to take you away like this sooner.
TO BE SEEN IN THAT GROTESQUE FORM...

What?
I disappeared?
The one who abandoned me and married another woman was you!
What are you saying?
I have never married.
I heard from my father that you had chosen to marry another woman.
I was also told something similar.
It seems...
What is going on?
We have been misunderstanding each other all this time.
Your father most likely kept me away due to my low social status.
But that doesn't matter.
I won't wait anymore.

I will make you mine.
But... I have changed, Tadamitsu.
No, you haven't.
YES... SO LONG AS WE ARE TOGETHER, WE CAN SURELY RETURN TO THAT DAY...
...you are the most important person to me.
Whether in the past or now ...

Kureha is dead, you say?!
Didn't that man say he was fine?!
Where is he?!
I don't know.
I only came to be acquainted with him during my travels.
I know nothing about him.
He's dead?
What about... his body?
It was taken away to be buried.
Were you able to meet your precious one?
Yes ...
... I was.
If he wasn't possessed by that thing, then-!
Dammit! It's all because of that Magatsu-Kami!
Then, be sure to treasure her from now on.
There's nothing you can do about things already lost.
No, wait.

時遍路

Love Beyond Time

Chapter One: Izutsu's Love

Part 5

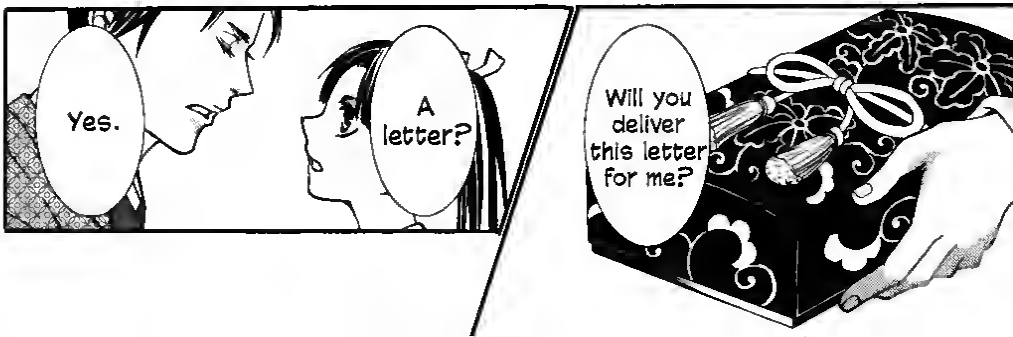
Thank goodness.
That kimono suits you more than it would me.
Yes.
Thank you.
I thought you were a boy...
Could it be because of the Magatsu-Kami...
No.
I wished for it to be so.
...that your growth stopped as a child?

You are an intelligent child, Kureha.
Though you are still so young.
The first time I met Master was many years ago.
My parents were killed by bandits who had invaded our village, and I escaped alone.
I was picked up shortly after while wearing a male student's kimono.
Master ...
... don't you wish to have a wife?
No, I don't.
MY MASTER WAS KIND. BUT NO MATTER WHO HE WAS WITH, HE ALWAYS SEEMED SO LONELY.
When I look at you, I remember my past.
Why can't people remain in their happy childhoods, I wonder.
I have such a cute servant with me.
That's more than enough.
HIS WORDS MADE ME HAPPY.

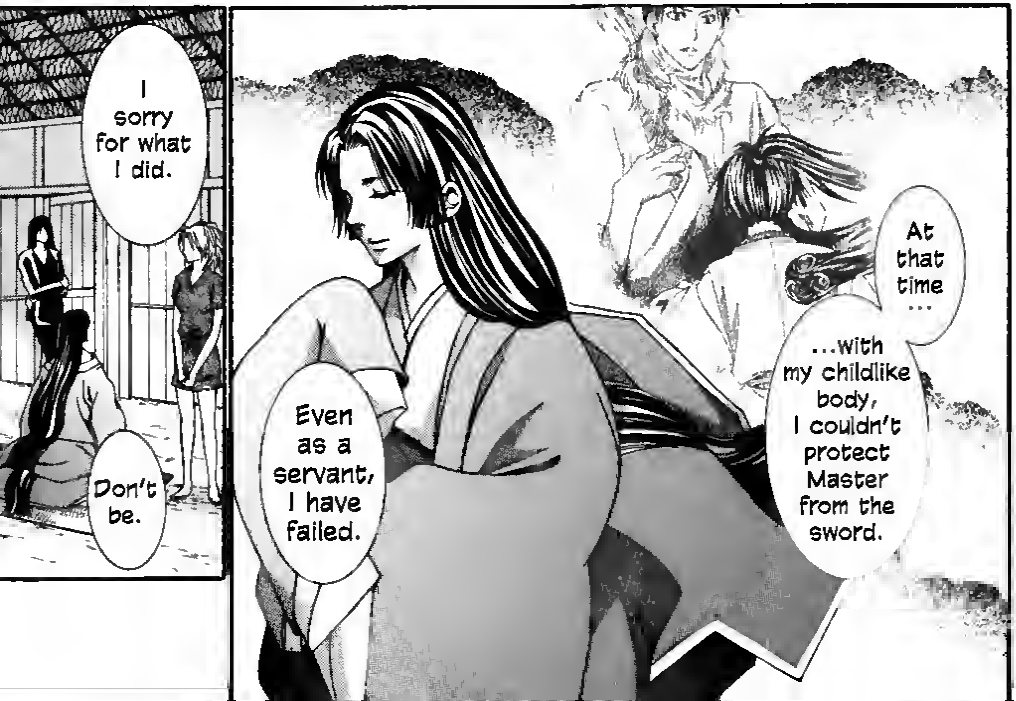
It is a deal.
Always remain just as you are, Kureha.
A pure and honest child.
REMAIN AS A CHILD...
Kyaaaa!
Then, shall I grant your wish?
Eternal youth in exchange for your soul.
BUT ONE DAY, I WILL EVENTUALLY BECOME AN ADULT.
IF THAT HAPPENS, WILL I BE HATED BY MY LORD?
I don't want that!

To the young me, Master was my whole world.
I could not live without him.
You made a deal with the Magatsu-Kami?!
Why would you ...?
I knew that *thing* was evil, but there was no alternative.

It must be proof that you are being protected by the gods.
You haven't changed in the slightest since we first met.
It is said that children are loved by God.
SINCE THEN, MASTER, WHO KNEW NOTHING, TOOK EVEN MORE PRECIOUS CARE OF ME.


Yes.
A letter?
Will you deliver this letter for me?

So you fell in love with your master.
I SEE. MASTER'S LONELINESS AND SADNESS WERE CAUSED BY THAT PERSON.
!
I want to deliver my feelings once more to the one I love.
I was merely a servant to him.
I knew that.
But, still.
THERE WAS NEVER ANY SPACE IN HIS HEART FOR ME.


I sorry for what I did.
Don't be.
Even as a servant, I have failed.
At that time ...
...with my childlike body, I couldn't protect Master from the sword.

RATTLE
"Kureha the servant" has died.
Even if I had returned to my original form, I am neither a child nor an undead.
TO BE HONEST IT WAS TOO PAINFUL TO STAY BY YOUR SIDE ANY LONGER.
Master no longer needs either of me, so I will disappear.
MAY YOU FIND HAPPINESS WITH LADY KARAKO, MASTER TADAMITSU.
...
Tada-mitsu? What are you thinking about?
I'm thinking about Kureha.
Your child servant?
CLATTER
CLATTER

Don't be silly, Karako.
Then, don't you find me frightening? A woman who turned into a demon because of her feelings for you?
A demon ...
I took it as a gift from God and never realized it was the work of a demon. I let her die.
No matter how much she aged, she remained a child.
WE'LL START OVER FROM WHERE WE FIRST MET.
We'll arrive at the harbor by morning. From there, we'll head to Iyokan ...
That happened because you kept thinking of me, didn't it?
I won't let you become like that again.
I WILL NEVER SEPARATE FROM THOSE PRECIOUS TO ME.
I WILL TAKE HER HAND AND MOVE ON.

Don't get distracted.
You really ...
If you worry about the future of every person who was possessed by the Magatsu-Kami, there'll never be an end.
Still ...
Hey, Rai. Do you think Kureha can become happy?
You know, Rai. You ...
Never-mind ...
What?
Want this?
Huh?
Sure.
Your goals are to find your lover and protect your village from the Magatsu-Kami.
It's a waste of time to think about unneces-sary things.

DECADES HAVE SINCE PASSED...
...AND WHEN WE MET KUREHA AGAIN, SHE HAD AGED INTO AN OLD WOMAN.
Excuse me.
Have we met somewhere before?
SQUEAL わい
Granny Kureha!
Come on! Let's go!
わい SQUEAL
Yes, yes. I'm coming.

It's sweet!
Good.
A human's life is the same.
Whether something is sweet or bitter depends on the person.
Even if they hate it, time continues on.
.....

Yeah!
Do you feel relieved now?

No matter how much time passes by.
CHAPTER ONE • END

Under this endless sky... where are you, Manibe?
Are you happy?
Are you smiling?
Let's go!
I'll surely find you.

Strong warriors joined and fought on each side...
...reducing the capital to ruin.
The war between the Shogun's son and nephew began during my grandfather's time.
It was a succession war.
What is an elderly man like you sitting here like this?
Oh, me?
No, not only the capital.
Surely others have suffered the same fate.
I sit here waiting for death.
Should I walk, hunger will strike. Whether I eat or not, only death awaits.
So I shall remain like a stone until that time arrives.

時遍路

Love Beyond Time

Chapter Two: Memorial for the Dead Part 1

HUNTING FOR THE MAGATSU-KAMI AND SEARCHING FOR MY LOVER'S REINCARNATION, RAI AND I CONTINUE ON OUR TIMELESS JOURNEY.
THE WORLD HEADS TOWARDS AN ERA OF WAR AND VIOLENCE.
To say nothing of the Magatsu-Kami...
I wonder how many are still alive.
Father!
Father!!
A SURVIVOR!
Hey, kid!

SHOVE
?!
SNAP
Wait!

THAT'S MANIBE'S NECKLACE!
Give that back!
You should give up.
No way!

It's already been twelve years, even if you keep searching...
It's the only thing I have left of Manibe.
Like this
The stones were probably used to make a hairpin or something by now.
You have a good eye, Miss.
This hairpin is a high quality item.
It's pretty.
STEP
Hey!
You haven't paid your protection fee yet. High quality? Then, hand it over!
You...
SNATCH

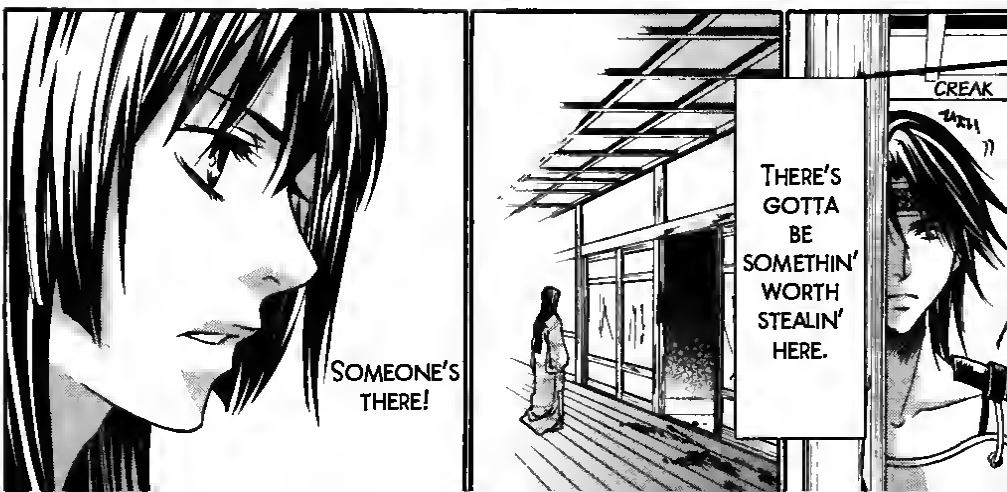
Hey! Don't steal my-!
If we don't protect you, your shop might end up gettin' wrecked by some bad guys, you know?
Like this!
BAM
Steal? You kiddin'? It's 'cuz of our protection that you're able to open shop.
That! The necklace you stole from me!
Give it back!
What the fuck?!
Hey, you! Hold it right there!
Huh?
What is it, woman?
If it's money I'll pay you!
I'll pay you so stop!

Anyways, just give it back!
SHOVE
Shut up, woman!
THIS KID HAS A GOOD MEMORY.
!
GRAB
I swiped this from some sucker when I was six!
It's my lucky charm.
That bastard! Who were they?!
Are you all right?
All you people keep yappin', "Give it back!" "Give it back!"
It got taken from you 'cuz you're weak!
!!
Next time you got somethin' important, try hidin' it in your hole!
Bandits.
A gang of good-for-nothing hood-lums.
They often go around demanding protection money and wreaking havoc.

You haven't heard a word I've said, have you?
Just wait till I find him!
That thief!
People will do anything to survive.
Even the country-side is affected by the war.
Most of the goods sold in the city are stolen goods.
Only the strong can survive in this war-torn world.
He was right, though.
Let's just spend it all in one go!
HA HA HA That's fo' sho!
Once we collect the reward money, which should we use it on, bro?
Women.
Sake.
Gam-bling.
Still, we gotta be careful.
When it comes 'ta savin' money, there's nothin' like war.

Come and get me!
Yeah.
There's no point helpin' a lord who's losin'.
How's the situation?
That's good for us, ain't it?
Looks like they got routed by the enemy.
CAN THEY FILL YOUR STOMACH?
No kiddin'.
CHUCKLE
If shit hits the fan, let's switch sides.
SLASH
NO. ONLY FOOD CAN!
TO HELL WITH CRAP LIKE LOYALTY AND INTEGRITY.
SLASH

...THIS IS PRETTY BAD.
THEY WERE SERIOUSLY AMBUSHED.
CRUSH
ギュッ
NO WAY I'LL END UP LIKE THIS.
STILL..
フッ WIPE

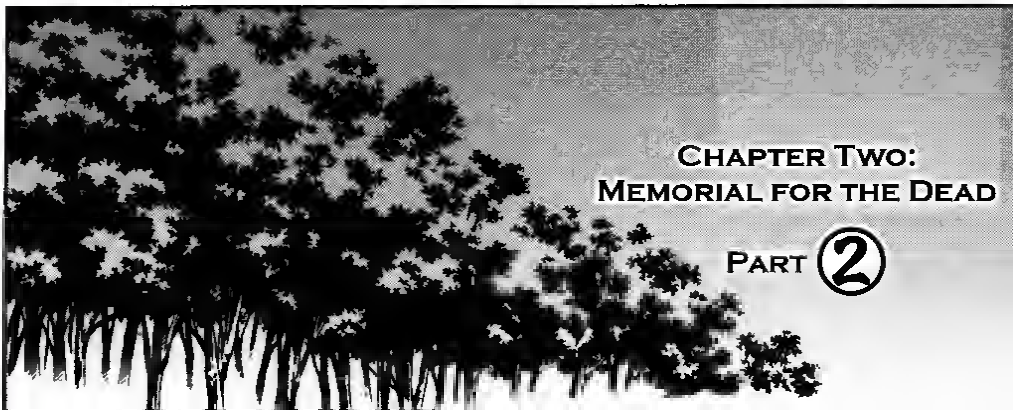

SOMEONE'S THERE!
CREAK
THERE'S GOTTA BE SOMETHIN' WORTH STEALIN' HERE.

Looks like she's royalty.
Hey, you!
Wh-
What ...?
Huh?
Fa- Father ...
...
Why me?

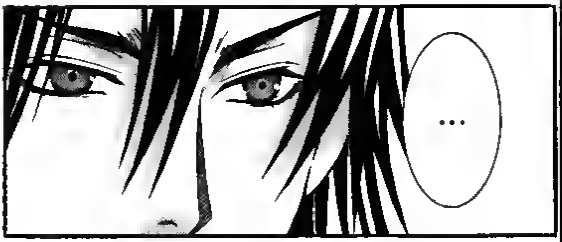
Idiot. If you don't hurry up 'n escape, you'll get killed too!
?!
THIS ISN'T LIKE ME.
WHAT'S GOIN' ON?

We have already obtained Lord Kawa's supporters. There is no longer any need to take over such a small country like this.
My Liege ...
That is enough.
I don't see the princess's corpse!
Did she escape ?!
Find her! Find Princess Saku!
RUSTLE
It would be a pity to let such a rumored beauty die.
WHAT DO I DO?
Excuse me... but I...
Keep quiet.

Sleeping soundly like some brat.
...
ZZZ
What? A woman? Do we rape her? Or sell her? Or rape, then sell her?
Something like this.
THERE'S NO WAY I TAKE HER TO WHERE THE GANG IS.
...
Hey. You have somewhere you can go?
Give me a break.


CHAPTER TWO:
MEMORIAL FOR THE DEAD
PART 2

Then, I survived?
You're finally up.
Should I have left you there to die?
My bad.
Where am I?
If you die, it'd be the end of your kingdom.
SHE REALLY IS A SHELTERED PRINCESS.
No, it is just that ...
...being the only one left alive, how can I face the ones who have died?
...
You think your death's gonna change anything?
I know.
Yes.


...

What?
No, it's not.

I didn't have the time to feel sad, and haven't returned to the village since.
Surviving took all I had.
I don't regret anything I've done.
The day my father died was the day I first started stealing.
Since then, I've done anything to survive.

I...
When I saw my father's head fall, rather than sadness, I felt fear.
It's deplorable.
I only thought of how to be saved.

❑ Free Talk

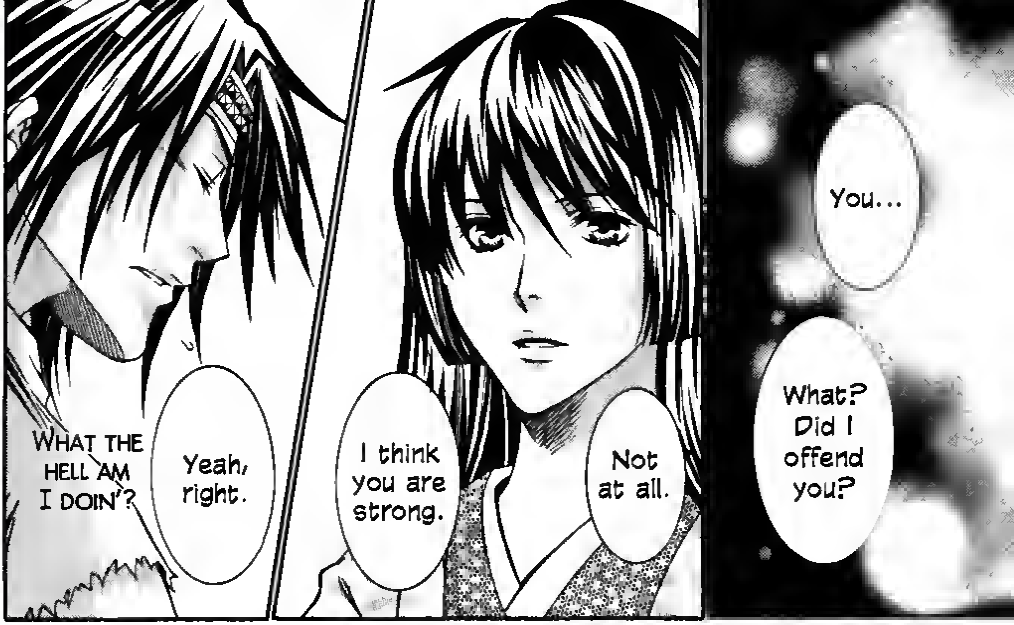
Memorial for the Dead

If I had to choose which chapter I like best in ***Love Beyond Time***, it would be the longest chapter, "Memorial for the Dead."
The characters' dialogues are a bit different from their "era." (Rather than dialogue, it might be more accurate to say the tone of voice/verbal expression).
I was thinking of how to give the characters more personality and decided to use a few foreign words to set a "pace." Personally, I wanted to draw a lot more characters (it's like that for all my stories). Including the latter half of Chapter 2, I really liked "Memorial for the Dead." I'm not sure whether it's OK to say this myself, but this is a story that deals with "living" and "finding a reason to live." I'm not young enough to talk about it with reckless passion, nor do I have enough experience to reflect on it philosophically. I just think about it a lot.

Things like "madness" are in actuality really close to home. The most trivial thing can trigger one to fall into it. In order to avoid that, we continue to live while maintaining a balanced equilibrium. It seems easy, but is quite difficult... maybe it's just me. (sweat drop)

To serve as a reminder, I wrote a simple, yet poignant story with the theme, " continuing to live in memory of someone."

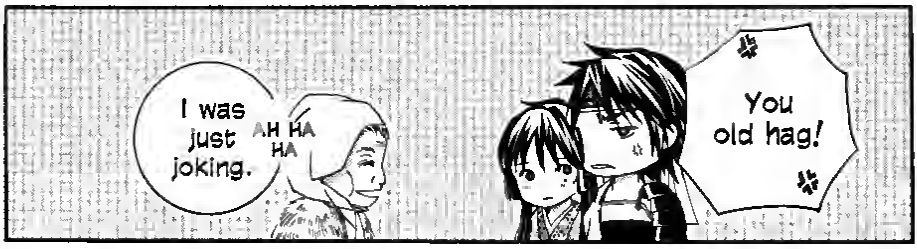
When a poor man dies like some bug, nothing changes.
The worst is dyin' like some dog.
The world isn't fair.
I'd rather live laughing at the world than work my ass off 'n die like that.


You...
What? Did I offend you?
Not at all.
I think you are strong.
Yeah, right.
WHAT THE HELL AM I DOIN'?

I BETTER DO SOMETHING 'BOUT HER CLOTHES. THEN, DUMP HER SOMEWHERE...
I'M NOT ACTIN' LIKE MYSELF.
My name is Saku.
I have yet to thank you for saving me.
TELLIN' SOME WOMAN BOUT MY PAST.
I'm Shiro.

REACH
Then, I shall ...
You wanna get caught 'n killed?
Hey! Your clothes are too eye-catchin'!
What? But does that kimono not belong to someone?
Go take it and change your clothes.
Listen up. See that kimono over there?
Who's there?
Granny Yoshi from the peach tree place?
WHY'S SHE IN A PLACE LIKE THIS? EVERYONE IN OUR VILLAGE SHOULD BE DEAD.
You're Shiro, right?
Is that you?
Shiro?
We just want some food and that kimono.
We're not here to hurt you.

脱ぎ!!
STRIP
Like hell I'd ever do that!
What night rendezvous?!
Ahhhh, but to have a night rendezvous at this age. It's been decades....
Not since gramps died.
I...
You don't need to say anything, Shiro. I already know.


I was just joking.
AH HA HA
You old hag!

Uh...
Yeah...
Is that lass over there your wife?
SO THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED...
The attack on our village twelve years ago left scarcely any survivors.
Those who survived escaped to the mountains to start a new life.
HUH?
So, you've returned. I'm surprised you found this place.

Everyone here seems so kind.
That's wonderful! Now, let's go get you changed.
Is that so?!
THAT'S 'CUZ THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT I'VE DONE.
Yeah.
Remember me? It's Genta! I played with you a lot when you were a brat.
What about me?
Try some of these vegetables I grew!
You sure brought back a beauty!
Shiro! You're back!
THE SITUATION'S SURE GOTTEN WEIRD.
Where are you going, Shiro?
I'm headin' out for a bit.
Such a pretty bride!
Let's get along, OK?
What? You need to go?
IT SHOULD BE OK TO LEAVE THE PRINCESS HERE.

That girl's kimono is also of rare quality.
I've got somethin' I need to do. I'll be back.
Leaving your wife behind?
I can smell the scent of blood on you
DAMN.
What're you tryin' to say?
If another war breaks out, you'd all be completely helpless!
No way I'm gonna live like that!
Shut up!
Do you plan to continue?
How stained have your hands gotten until now?
Hidin' away in some desert deep in the mountains.
Don't be a fool.

Even if it's barren, it can be sown.
War or strife. In the end, one still needs to fill their stomach.
At least eat before you go.
Is it good?
Yeah ...
...
Hey, um.
Granny Yoshi?
That way everyone will easily accept her.
Even if it's not true.
If she's your wife.
She's sleeping again.
Can I leave the girl here?

She sure can sleep.
It's because she feels safe.
You sayin' I should stay as her husband?

THE WARMTH OF A KIND TOUCH.
THE WARMTH FROM GRANNY YOSHI'S FOOD.
THE TIME THAT SEEMED TO SLOW DOWN WHILE I WAS THERE.
IT WAS ALL SOMEHOW VERY WARM.
She's been through hell.
Safe, huh.
I'VE FORGOTTEN WHAT THAT FEELS LIKE.

I'm bored.
Bro isn't back yet.
We haven't caught the princess yet either.
We've searched around the area...
...but no one fits her description-
Hmph.
What the hell's that, then?
Oh, right!

Shut up and stay quiet!
!
Girls we captured. But none of them fit the bill.
Out of my way!
I've seen you guys before.
You're friends of that thief!
Right! In the city!
If ya keep squawkin' like that, I'll kill ya!
Yeah.

時遠路

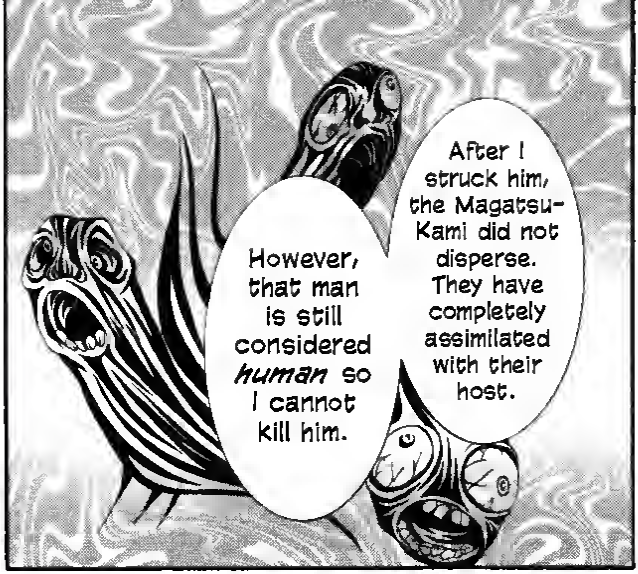
Love Beyond Time

Chapter Two: Memorial for the Grave Part 3

THE MAGATSU-KAMI!
Say yer prayers!
SQUIRM
SQUIRM
SQUIRM
SQUIRM
SQUIRM
Let's off her. She ain't the princess anyways.
!!
CLASH
Rai!

BAM
Ow!
Who the fuck-?!
Let's go.
Geez, you're really ...
Why are you always running off on your own?
I went looking for that thief.
Then, somehow ended up getting captured ...
...
That guy is trouble.

■ Lost Again ■
LOOK
LOOK
Oh, man I lost Rai again.
Well...
Oh, my. What is your companion like?
Are you looking for someone?
Uh, yeah.
He lived in a cave so he doesn't talk much. He always wears black.
He pushes all the work onto me and he does nothing but drink.
In other words, he's...
No clue
?? I guess so.
...a jobless bum?
Or a gigolo?


After I struck him, the Magatsu-Kami did not disperse. They have completely assimilated with their host.
However, that man is still considered *human* so I cannot kill him.

It wasn't just one or two, why were there so many?
I don't know.

Only...
It's only a matter of time before he loses himself completely.

WHISPER
WHISPER
Well, he's never lost before.
Gen-pachi's seriously pissed.
He's dead!
He's dead!
He's dead!
That long haired bastard.
I'll definitely kill him!
Hey! Didn't you see it?
See what?
WHAT THE HELL... ARE THEY?
I'll kill 'im.
I'll kill 'im.
I'll kill 'im.
SINCE WHEN HAVE THOSE *THINGS* BEEN CLINGIN' ON HIM?
There was somethin' comin' outta his back.
We found the princess!
Hey! Big news!

This guy saw 'em fleein' towards the moun-tains.
How 'bout the one carryin' her?
It looked like our bro, Shiro!
Oh, yeah?
That bastard took her.
He plannin' on keepin' all the reward to himself?
Or maybe he decided to quit the gang 'n run?
Doesn't matter.
That bastard's gonna get what's comin'.
SIZZLE

SQUIRM
I'll kill 'im!
I'll kill 'im.
I'll kill 'im.
SQUIRM
The smell of his blood from his burnt flesh.
I can't wait.
WHAT THE HELL HAPPENED TO YOU, GENPACHI?
...
Rin!
Hey, Rin!
Come here a sec!

THAT'S RIGHT. I AM NO LONGER "SAKU," BUT "RIN."
What's wrong? You've been in a daze.
I'm sorry.
This is the last batch of roasted rice from the village below.
Be very, very careful when you plant them.
The soil is bad, so it's hard for seeds to take root.
We've recently been able to till the land a bit.
Now, then.
All that's left is to put these up and we're done.
What is that?
You don't know?

We set these up at the water inlet of our rice fields.
They're called gohei, wooden wands with paper offerings containing branches of Yaezakura and roasted rice.
With these, the gods will bless the field.
I pray that our seeds will grow.
I pray that our rice fields will become plentiful.
Oh, right.
Hey, Rin.
Yes?
Is there something you're hiding?
ドキッ
TH-THUMP
No... I am not hiding anything.
You can't fool me, you know.
WHAT SHOULD I DO?

You and Shiro haven't had sex in a while, right?
But, it's bad for the body! Especially since you're both still young!
I understand that you must be respectful while living at Granny Yoshi's.
Um...
THANK GOODNESS. I THOUGHT WE WERE FOUND OUT.
OK. Now, it's your turn.
That is...
I...
I'M TRULY THANKFUL.
Neither gods nor men can resist a young woman.
Good luck!

EVERYONE HERE HAS WHOLE-HEARTEDLY ACCEPTED ME.
I'VE COME TO TREASURE THIS PLACE.
I pray that our seeds will grow.
I pray that our rice fields will become plentiful.

Brother Shiro!
Let's go gather food on the mountain!

Hey, Shinpei!
RUB
RUB
Braken.
Osmund.
Fuki.

Don't be so stingy!
Don't go eatin' it.
That's for our winter rations.

Guess I'll keep your snack, then.
Who you callin' stingy?
!
That's mean!
IT'S BEEN TWO MONTHS SINCE I'VE SETTLED IN THIS VILLAGE.
REALIZES
WHAT AM I DOING?

時遡路

LOVE BEYOND TIME

CHAPTER TWO: MEMORIAL FOR THE DEAD PART 4

Want mine?
Really?
GUL?
Hey. Got another one?
...
I see.
Be my dad, Shiro!
Then I can eat 'em every day!
Stupid. Like I'd want such a huge kid.
Is it good?
Yeah!
TEARS
Hurry up and go back!

What?!
But, man is this place cramped 'n old.
It's such a pain goin' home 'n buildin' a fire.
Plus, I wanna eat Granny Yoshi's food!
No way!
Then, get out!
That's because we're all family!
Ha ha!
...
It's lively eating with everyone.

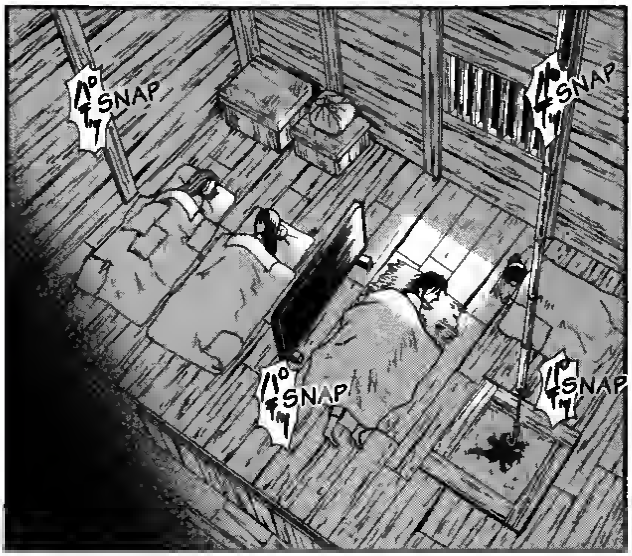
☐ Free Talk

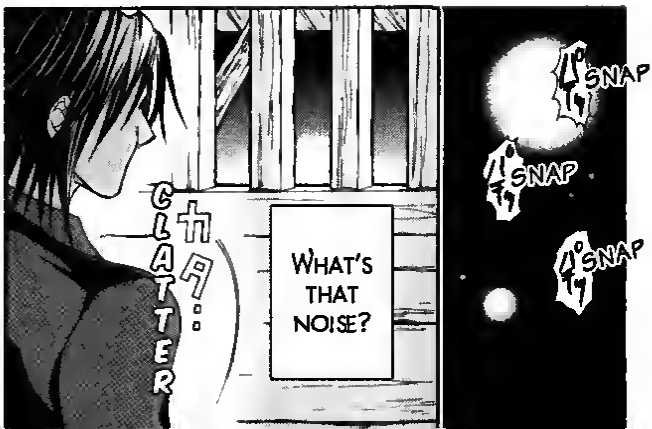
Memorial for the Dead
(Continued)

OK. Enough with talking nonstop about things like "life." Genpachi is a characer with a foul mouth, who likes to play around with skeleton bones. I feel kinda guilty because I really like Genpachi's character. (laughs) The impudent, villainous scoundrel. He later becomes completely assimilated with the Magatsu-Kami. Which is no surprise given his character.

Genpachi was also a character I have never drawn before. Or rather, he was my attempt at depicting the evil within me. (laughs) On the other hand, the one who stole Setona's necklace, Shiro, is a really strong man who protects his family. But if seen through another angle, he's quite dirty.
How much does he have to roll around or fall in the dirt before he's satisfied? (laughs) Even towards the end, he's seen falling down in the dirt in a two-page spread. (sweat drops)

Dirt-loving Shiro appears again at the very end for Rin and his precious family. Rin is the classical Japanese woman with the kind yet strong heart. (It would have been better if I had drawn out her character and feelings more.) I hope I was able to portray the turbulent atmosphere of a country at war. Comic books express their stories through pictures, so I hope I was able to accomplish that.





SNAP
SNAP
SNAP
THOSE GUYS ARE...!
!!
A BATTLE?!
BAM!!!
Help!
Help!
Save me!

SNICKER
ろっ
Oh!
Hey, bro!
Nice to see you here!
What the hell are you doing?!
Genpachi, you...
Bastard!
Horse-back riding practice?
Who knows?

Cut it out!
What the-?!
NEIGGHHH
So you did run away.
You pathetic coward!
STOMP
...
Urggnh.

...
Wasn't it prohibited to leave the gang?
Did you get scared from the previous battle and run away?
You're hidin' her aren't ya?
We came to get the wanted princess.
Too bad. We didn't come here to pillage.
There's nothing here for us to steal, Kenpachi. Give me a break!
We don't know any-thing!
Please, don't!
DAMMIT!
Where's the woman?
No answer? Then, I'll just have to start that riding practice ...
Hey, you!
Yeah, that's going too far.
Hey. He can't be serious, right?

Arrgh ...
FLINCH
What the hell're you whisperin' about?
Plannin' to back out?
BAM ボコッ BAM ボコッ
Uwaaaah!
Arrrgh!
BAM ボコッ

CRAWL ズリ…
Stop ...it!
They'll die!
I'm the one who's wrong! I betrayed the gang!
If you're gonna kill someone, kill me!
These people have nothing to do with this! They just live here!
I ALWAYS FIGURED, "IT WAS YOUR OWN FAULT FOR BEING WEAK, AND THAT THOSE WHO GOT TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF DESERVED IT."

Look!
On Kenpachi's body... what the hell is that?
You see it too?
Oh, yeah?
SQUIRM
SQUIRM
Tryin' to act cool? Sayin' "Kill me!"
Now I'm all riled up.
TROLLOP
Then, don't mind if I do!
STOMP
STOMP
Gwarrgh!
DAMN... AM I GOING TO DIE LIKE THIS?
LIKE A DAMN DOG?
FUCK!

Get ahold of yourself, Kenpachi.
We found the princess.
RIN!
Saved us time. She just came to us herself and told us to take her! ♪

Please stop.
I'll go wherever you want.
So please don't hurt these people anymore.
Are you really Princess Saku?
Yes.
I am Princess Sa-!
COVER IT!
Rin is my daughter! I won't just let you take her!
You old hag!
?!

時遍路

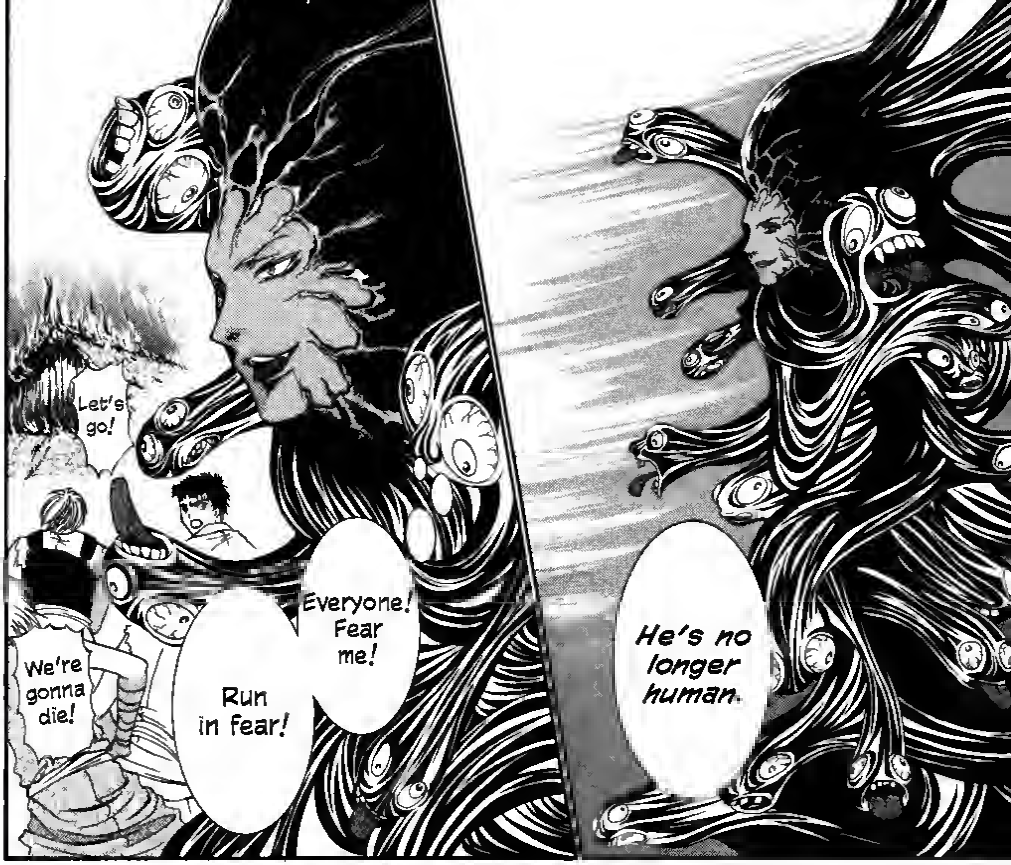
Love Beyond Time

Chapter Two: Memorial for the Dead Part 5

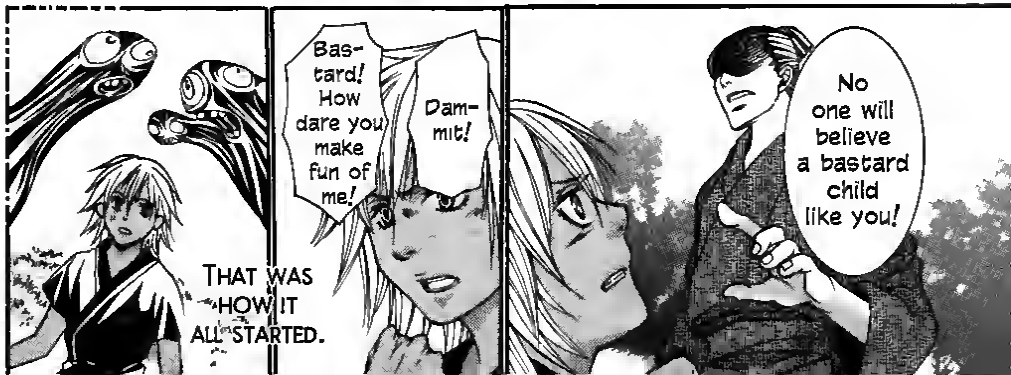
Humans receive food from the land's blessing and return to the land once they die.
Slighting it will only earn you Hell's wrath!
Oh, really?
Then, Granny.
How about this?
Why don't you go *there* first and watch what happens?
STAB
Granny Yoshi!
Ugh!
Aaa ahh!

SQUIRM
SQUIRM
SQUIRM
There's still someone I've gotta kill.
I'm not done having fun yet.
Shut up.
That's enough, Kenpachi! Let's go!
Uwaahh!
PIERCE
What the hell's going on?!
That ain't Kenpachi! That's a monster!
FWOOOSSHH
I want more! More!
Kill!
Kill!
Kill!

RUSTLE
RUSTLE
I sense something unearthly. Let's hurry, Setona.
Over there... where it's glowing. Is it the Magatsu-Kami?
This is...!
VIBRATE
VIBRATE


He's no longer human.
Everyone! Fear me!
Run in fear!
We're gonna die!
Let's go!

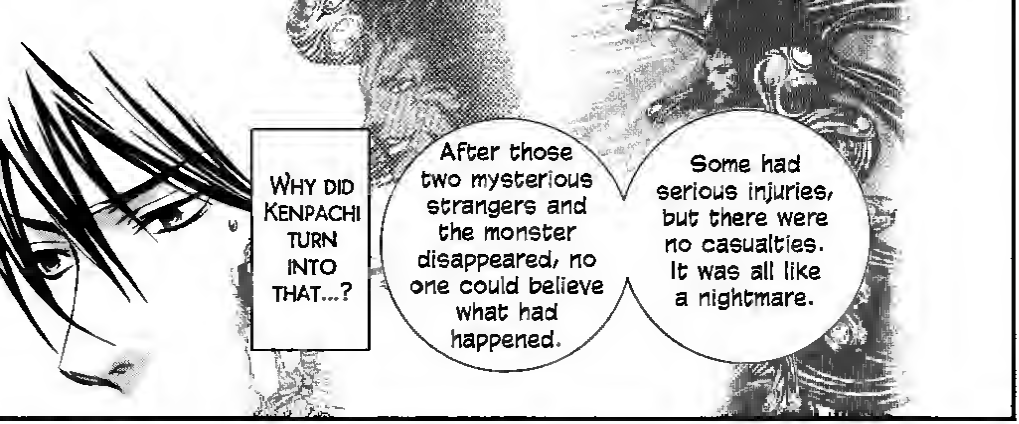
I'LL HUNT DOWN EVERYONE WHO'S EVER LOOKED DOWN ON ME AND KILL 'EM!
The one who stole the New Year's rice was you!
It wasn't me!
Liar!


No one will believe a bastard child like you!
Dammit!
Bastard! How dare you make fun of me!
THAT WAS HOW IT ALL STARTED.

BUT...
I am invincible!
You bastard! I won't let anyone look down on me!
SINCE THEN, EVERY TIME I HATED SOMEONE, THOSE *THINGS* INCREASED.

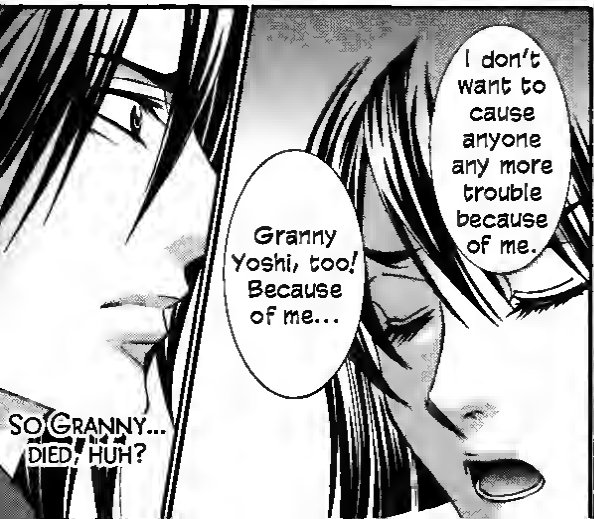
"MYSELF..."
SLASH!!!
I CAN'T REMEMBER. I CAN'T REMEMBER ANYMORE.
"WHO AM I?"

Arrghh...
RISES
You serious?
Yes.
You were asleep for two days.
Thank goodness!
You have finally woken up!
It was thanks to Shiro that everyone was saved.
Is everyone all right?
GOING UNARMED AND GETTING THRASHED.
Dammit!
I'm so pathetic!
It's a miracle you got away with just that injury.
You musn't move yet.
Ouch! That hurts!


WHY DID KENPACHI TURN INTO THAT...?
After those two mysterious strangers and the monster disappeared, no one could believe what had happened.
Some had serious injuries, but there were no casualties. It was all like a nightmare.

Rin?
Now that Shiro is awake, I feel relieved.
Even so.

I love the village.
I... love the people here.
Rin, why...?

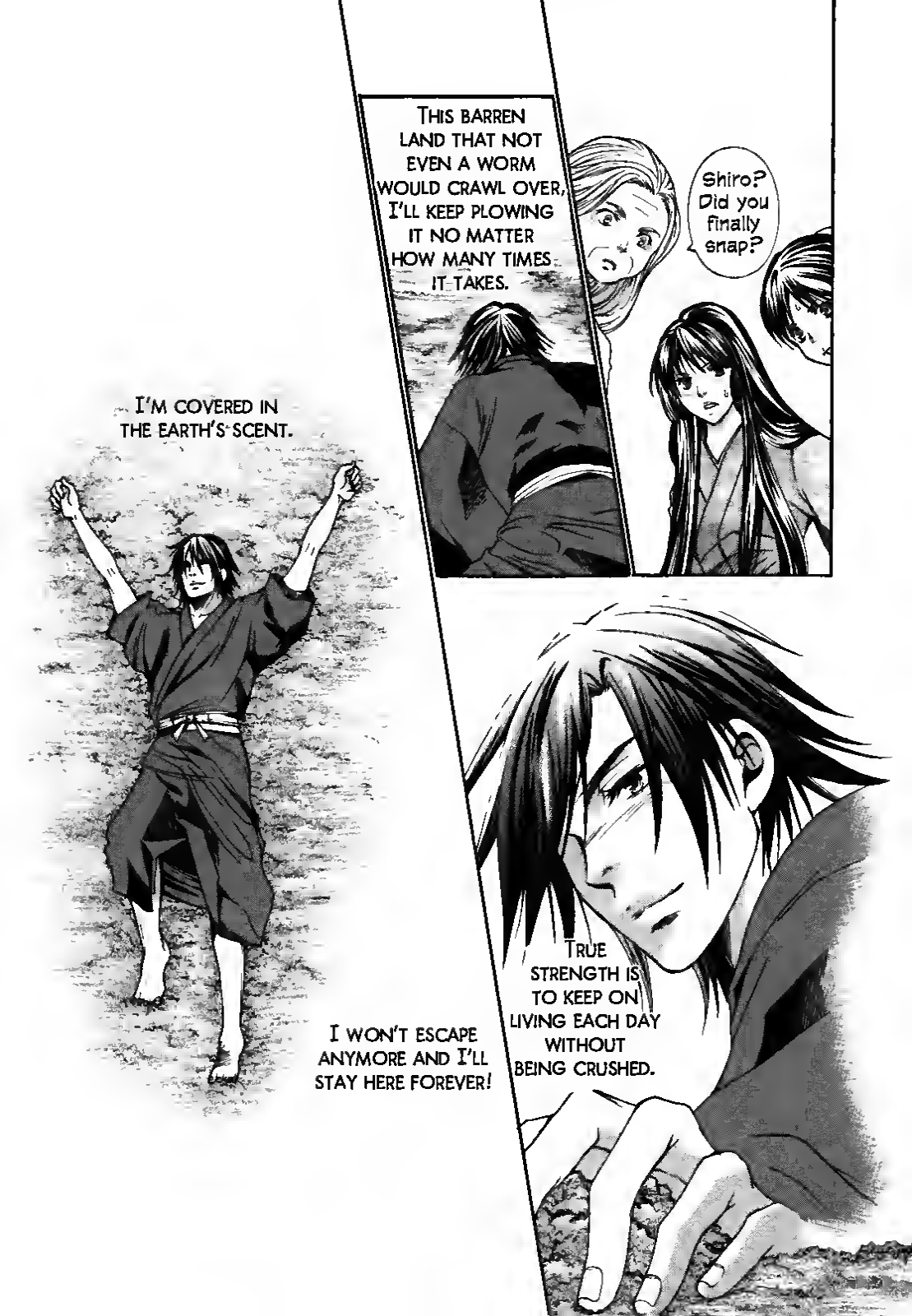

SO GRANNY... DIED, HUH?
Granny Yoshi, too! Because of me...
I don't want to cause anyone any more trouble because of me.

With this, I can leave the village.
Thank you for everything until now, Shiro.

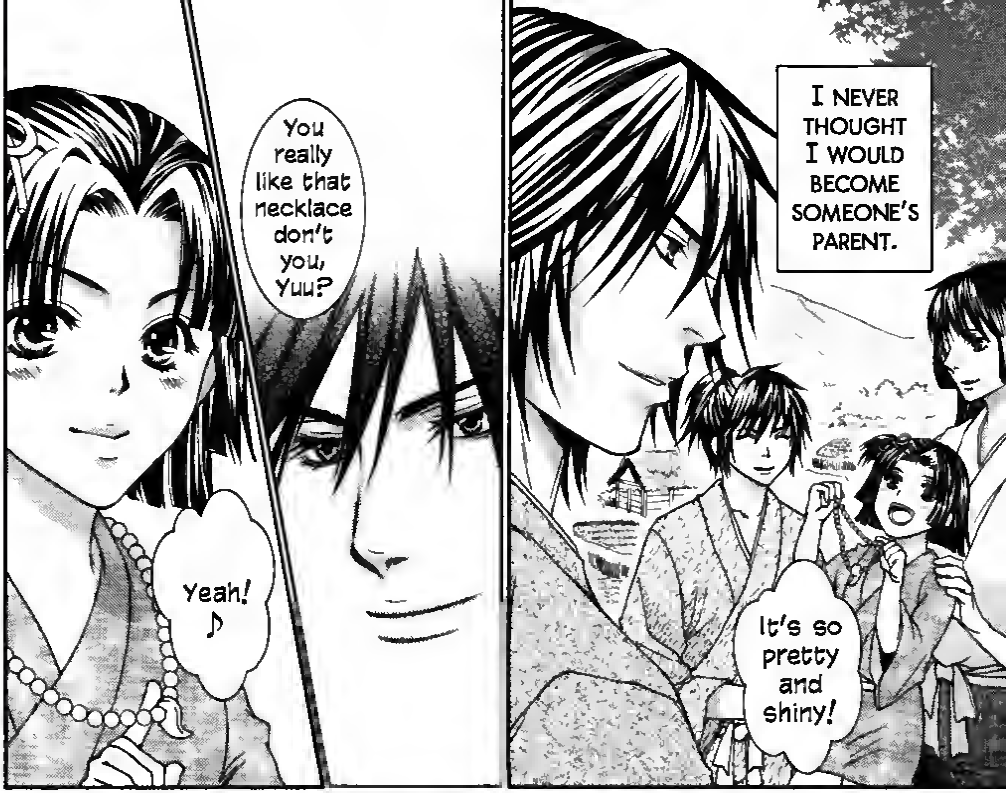
THE WARMTH I NEVER USED TO KNOW.
Please! Don't leave!
Don't go!
But ...
Granny gave her life to save you! If you're gone, it would have all been for nothing!
Idiot, that means you've gotta stay!
STEP

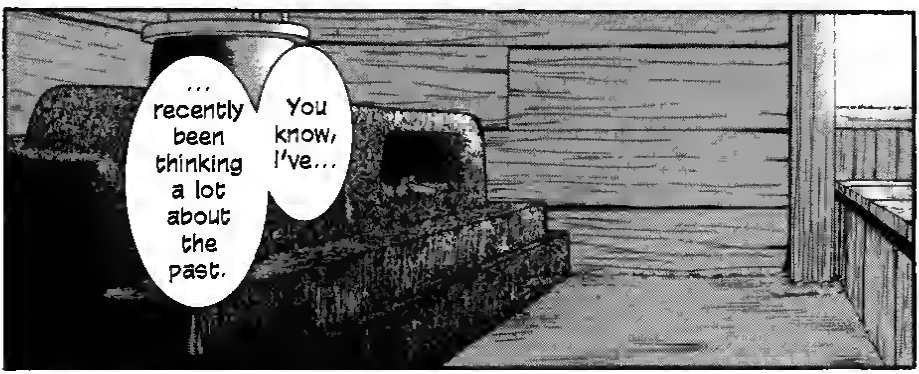
I CAN'T GO BACK.
Well, aren't you full of surprises. So the first thing you do when you're well is flirt?
Shiro...
Please stay by my side!
I don't know how to describe it, but when you're here, it's warm.

Granny?!
I thought you had kicked the buck-
Don't write me off as you please.
CLATTER
Ah! Here it is!
Wearing this saved me!
THAT'S MY ARMOR!
This granny is invulnerable!
SHOVE
Now then! If you're well, then go help with the village repairs!
Ouch!
...
Geez ...


THIS BARREN LAND THAT NOT EVEN A WORM WOULD CRAWL OVER, I'LL KEEP PLOWING IT NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES IT TAKES.
Shiro? Did you finally snap?
I'M COVERED IN THE EARTH'S SCENT.
I WON'T ESCAPE ANYMORE AND I'LL STAY HERE FOREVER!
TRUE STRENGTH IS TO KEEP ON LIVING EACH DAY WITHOUT BEING CRUSHED.

Heading out to the fields.
Working till the sun sets.
Every day feels the same, yet is definitely different.
In the blink of an eye, so much time had passed.
Daddy!
I brought the flowers for Granny!
What's wrong, Yuu?
Granny passed away peacefully two years ago.
I turned six, Granny.
Please keep watching me from Heaven.
Till the very end, she was always looking after our family.
A family...
Together with my and Rin's child, Yuu, and Shinpei who is currently living with us.





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Love Beyond Time

Chapter Two: Memorial for the Dead Part 6

About the past?
Yes.
About my life in the castle and about my deceased mother and father.
If I thought about the people who died and their kindness, I would have drowned in sorrow and not be able to move forward.
Every day was filled with fear of being invaded by the neighboring kingdom, but everyone was always kind to me.
That was why I tried not to think about it when the castle fell.
Being able to recall those memories now ...
...must be proof that I am truly happy.
I'M THE TYPE TO GET ANGRY WHEN I'M SAD OR FRUSTRATED.
That's because ...
...Rin is kind.
I PRETENDED I DIDN'T SEE IT AND RAN AWAY.
The warmth of Rin on my back that day changed me.
Oh my.
Your back is also very warm.

I WILL PROTECT MY PRECIOUS FAMILY NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS.
Hey, Rin.
Let's always be together.
I finally found you!
Monster girl?!
Opps! I mean, the monster exterminator...
Hey!
The guy who stole my necklace!
It's the "monster girl!"
You were in this village that time?
I was! And almost died, too!

"Here. Have it back!"
...is what I want to say, but...
SCRATCH
Even though I saw it with my own eyes...
... I still can't believe it.
I see. So the reason Kenpa-chi turned into that monster was...
... because he let those Magatsu-Kami possess his body.
The necklace, right?
I know.
I thought I remembered stealing it from a man, but it was actually you.
THE FIRST SPOILS OF WAR I EVER STOLE. I KEPT IT ON ME AS A COMMEMORATIVE TROPHY.
THE MAN I AM NOW NO LONGER NEEDS IT.

So what? You got a problem?
Not really.
CHUCKLE
クスッ
You've sure progressed.
The little thief, to a hoodlum, and now a good father?
If I take it back, she'll cry.
...what should I do?
It suits you! You look happy.
Say.
What are you, really? You never age.
Are you human?
Ah, hey.
The necklace... I'll come back for it some other time.

It happened on a night during the rainy season.
Ahhhh ...
It hurts ...
Who knows?
I wonder about that, too.
Mmmnn ...
Ahhh ...
Yuu! Has the fever not dropped yet?
Since it got dark ...
She has a fever, but her hands and legs are cold. She might have some terrible illness.
I'll be right back.
Where are you going?
To gather some fever reducing herbs.
I heard about it from Granny.

IF I CAN GET SOME OF THE HERBS!
Wait for me, Yuu! I'll be sure to cure you!
JUST LIKE I THOUGHT.
ON A CLIFF AWAY FROM THE VILLAGE, THERE IS A PLACE WITH MANY MEDICINAL PLANTS. IT IS SAID THAT THEY CAN CURE ALMOST ANY ILLNESS.
YOU'VE GOTTA BE KIDDING ME!
Uwahhhh!
Shit!
SLIP
?!
SLITHER

Rin!!
TH-THUMP
Shin-pei...
Yuu ...
Ughh ...
DAMMIT!
I CAN'T DIE IN A PLACE LIKE THIS.
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
WHY DID THIS HAVE TO HAPPEN TO ME?!
I HAVE TO GO BACK!
SLITHER
YUU IS WAITING FOR ME! SHE'S CRYING.

I HAVE TO GO BACK!
I sense something.
VIBRATE
VIBRATE
Wait, Rai!
...
That's...
THE MAGATSU-KAMI HAS ALREADY POSSESSED HIM, BUT THAT'S SURELY...

Water … I want water.
Yuu! I'll bring you some right away!
Did something happen to him?
It's been quite a while, but Shiro has not returned.
I'm back.
Shiro!
Before that, you should make her medicine.

Shinpei also got tired and fell asleep.
Thank goodness! Her fever is slowly receding.
Don't get mad.
Really! Shiro, you...
Oh, right. I fell and it got dirty so I borrowed one from a neighbor.
I'm good at that remember?
What happened to your clothes? They're different from the ones you left with.
I'm really sorry.
Rin, I...
Hey, Rin...

I'm sorry, Rin.
I WANTED FOR US TO ALWAYS BE TOGETHER.
BUT NOW I'VE RUN OUT OF TIME.
Shiro? What's wro-?
SO I'LL BURN YOUR IMAGE INTO MY EYES...
...ON MY LIPS...
...SO THAT I'LL NEVER FORGET.
You must also be tired. You should rest.

I'LL NEVER FORGET THIS WARMTH.
Now, then.
I'd better get going.
It should be somewhere over there.
RISE

Sorry to keep you waiting.
CHAPTER TWO:
MEMORIAL FOR THE DEAD
PART 7

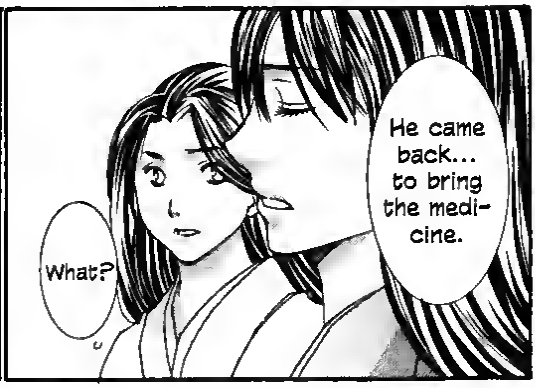
You really... came back.
I'm back, Sis.
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
...I WANTED TO LIVE NO MATTER WHAT.
Please! Give me a little time!
AT THAT TIME...
I don't need to live forever.
Just one night... no even half a night is fine.
I just need enough time to bring Yuu medicine!
Even if the Magatsu-Kami's power keeps you alive, your body will eventually change.
Your body is already dead.
But I must return to my family!
I know you're here for the Magatsu-Kami.

Thanks to you, Yuu was saved.
I WAS ALLOWED TO GO BACK.
Thank you.
Now, do it with a single strike.
A single strike ...
I don't want to turn out like Kenpa-chi.
So make it so I can't come back to life.
There's nothing to worry about. Once the Magatsu-Kami leave your body, you will die.
After that, your body will simply rot away.
I see.
So I'll be returning to the earth.

Hey.
You said before that I was a good father, right?
Did you mean that?
Yes, I did.
That's good to hear.

I GUESS I'LL GO ON AHEAD...
SLASH
WELL.
...LIVING WITH YOU ALL HAS LET ME DISCOVER WHAT'S REALLY IMPORTANT.
STILL. RIN, YUU, SHINPEI...
IF IT WAS MY PAST SELF, I'D PROBABLY BE LAUGHING AT THIS DOG'S DEATH.
THANK YOU... AND SORRY FOR NOT BEING ABLE TO PROTECT THAT WARMTH TO THE END.
...AND GET YELLED AT BY GRANNY.
Shiro!
You really are hopeless.

He came back for our child, Yuu.


What?
He came back... to bring the medicine.

ロンズカイ

Still, more than anyone... he was stronger and kinder.
Since he's so hopeless, he didn't even give his goodbyes properly.

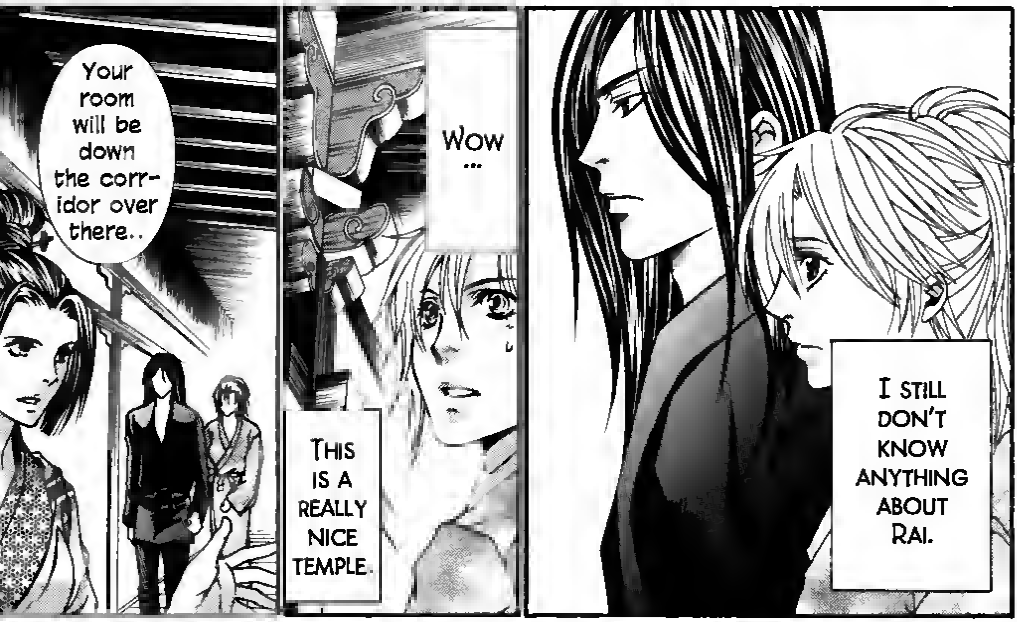
His happiness was what I had always wished for.
To be together with Manibe and have children who got along like my sister and I did.
Yeah ...
What's wrong?
THE VILLAGE AND SISTER I WANTED TO PROTECT ARE NO LONGER IN THIS WORLD.
That guy... smiled so happily at the end.
PEOPLE CAN CHANGE THAT MUCH ONCE THEY FIND SOMETHING TO PROTECT.
While searching for Manibe's reincarnation, I have encountered many people.
I have seen various ways a person's life begins and ends.
Keeping on this journey while never aging...
...I'm not human anymore, am I?
Since I am no longer human, I shouldn't wish for a human's happiness.

What do you think of as, "A human's happiness?"
Huh?
If it's like you said, then you have a chance of obtaining it.
The only one you want is Manibe, right?
Yeah.
Then listen up, Setona.
Once you lose your objective, immortality becomes torture.
All that will be left is endless boredom.
You're right.
I don't know what was up with me.
I guess I had a moment of weakness. Sorry, Rai.

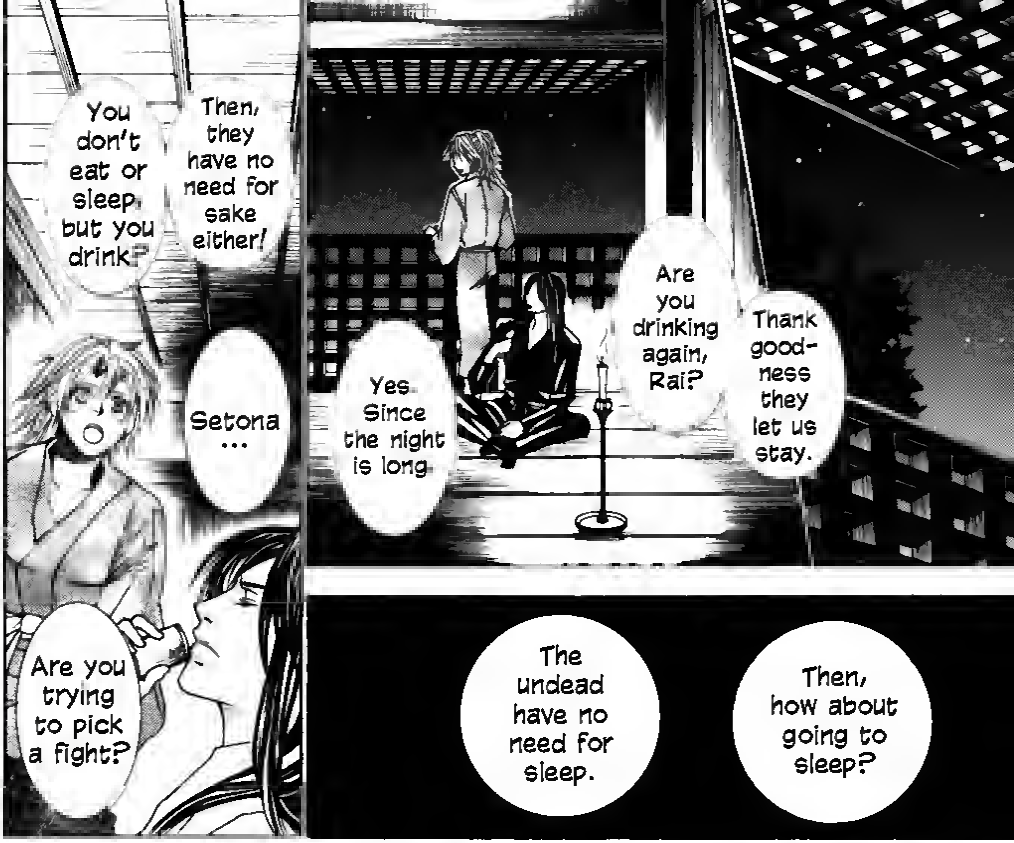
POFF
You'll be fine.
Isn't it strange? I've already seen it countless times, yet...
I just can't get used to it. Seeing people I've barely met die.
...you are still *human*.
As long as you feel that way...
...
If I think about it...
What were you doing before that?
Since when have you been the Magatsu-Kami's watch-man?
What is it?
Hey, Rai.

Excuse me. We were on the road and it has gotten dark.
We were wondering if we could stay a night here.
Oh, my.
It's rare for this temple to receive any travelers.
RAI NEVER TALKS ABOUT HIMSELF.
I KNOW NOTHING ABOUT HIM.
The sky's gone dark since we left the village.
Let's ask if we can stay the night at that temple
OK.

One searching for the reincarnation of her lover and one hunting down the Magatsu-Kami.
Before I realized it, much time had passed as well as countless meetings and farewells.


Your room will be down the corridor over there..
Wow ...
This is a really nice temple.
I still don't know anything about Rai.

I'm called Shino. I'll be here. Call me if you need anything.


Thank goodness they let us stay.
Are you drinking again, Rai?
Yes. Since the night is long.
Then, how about going to sleep?
The undead have no need for sleep.
Then, they have no need for sake either!
You don't eat or sleep, but you drink?
Setona ...
Are you trying to pick a fight?

...wouldn't you need to drink or do something to deal with the stress?
If you were stuck with an unwanted companion for hundreds of years...
WINK

時遍路

Love Beyond Time

Chapter Two: Memorial for the Dead Part 8

STOMP
WHAT'S WITH HIM?! HE DIDN'T NEED TO GO THAT FAR!
STOMP
I WAS JUST A LITTLE CURIOUS ABOUT HIM, THAT'S ALL!
PISSED
What's ...?
It wasn't like I wanted to travel together with you either!
...
What's that supposed to mean?!
Oh, dear. What are you doing at this time of night, Miss?
You were curious about your companion's past.
Was that the cause of your fight?
Yes.
I see.

We've been traveling together, but I know nothing about him.
Don't you think that's lonely?
But aren't you on a journey to search for your lover?
When you find him, won't you be separating from your current companion?
Well, that's ...
I WANTED SOMEONE TO LISTEN TO ME. OF COURSE, I COULDN'T TELL THEM THE REAL TRUTH.
I think that your companion is thinking about when he'll have to travel alone again.
In order not to form any attachments, he doesn't talk about unnecessary things.
...
Have you always been alone in this temple?
RUSTLE
I HAVEN'T SEEN ANYONE ELSE.
Well.
You think so?
Maybe you're right.
This is just my humble opinion.
Oh, my.
Are you also interested in listening to my story?
SNEER

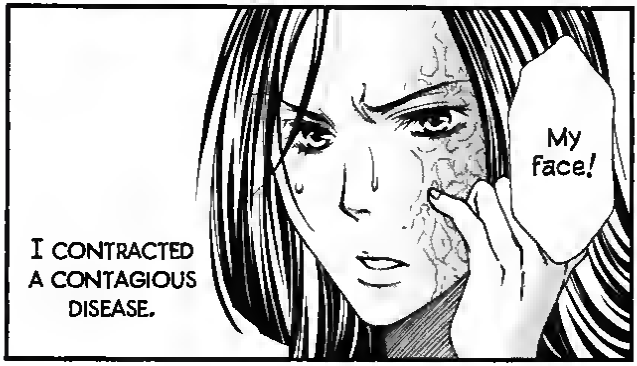
☐ Memorial for the Dead (Second Half)

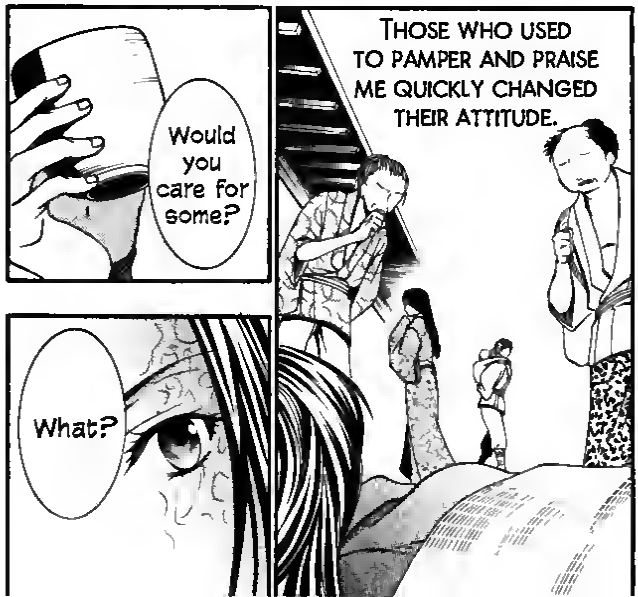
This story as well as the two following are actually continuations of "the grave." At first, I thought I would make this into a separate story, but it became a an extension of their journey after searching for shelter at a temple. The prostitute's story was a theme I really wanted to draw since long ago. If only I had drawn it a bit more thoroughly... (though I've been saying that for every story...) Arrghh ..

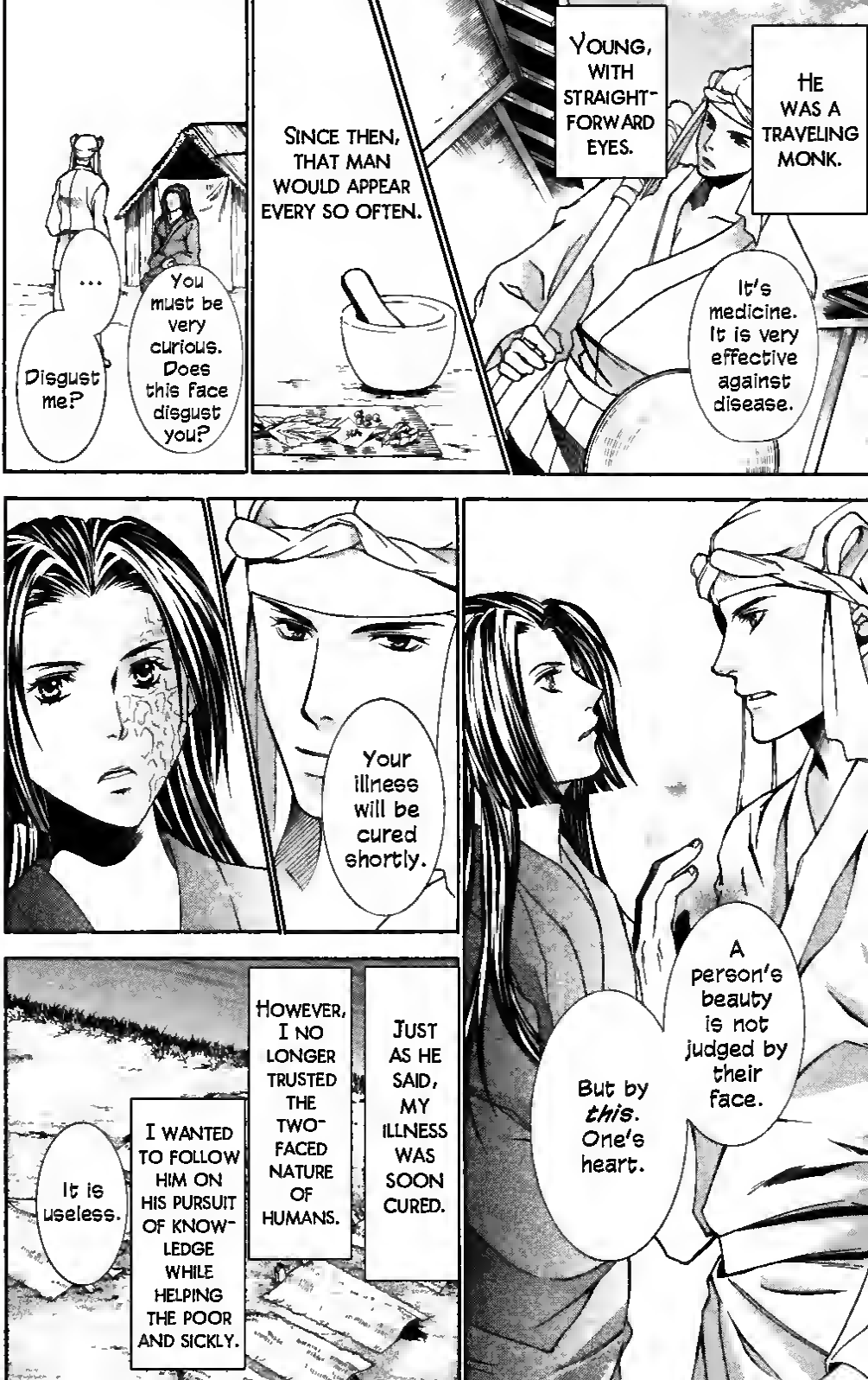
Even if she only said a single word to the monk, she chose that road based on various ideals and beliefs so I can't simply put it into words. If they spoke again, it would have gone very long (laughs). Currently, I have visited most temples that are mountain-shaped, but when I pray, I have a strange feeling/mood. Not a feeling of seeing Buddha, but a feeling that Buddha is definitely "there."

Heavenly grounds? The bridge between our present world and the other side? Together with that kind of atmosphere, I feel that there definitely exists something there... Of course, that is just from my perspective.

I could only think that it was Buddha. Somehow, it keeps coming up. This time it's with a taste of horror, but if I have another chance, I'll try creating a manga slowly that takes up half my lifetime.





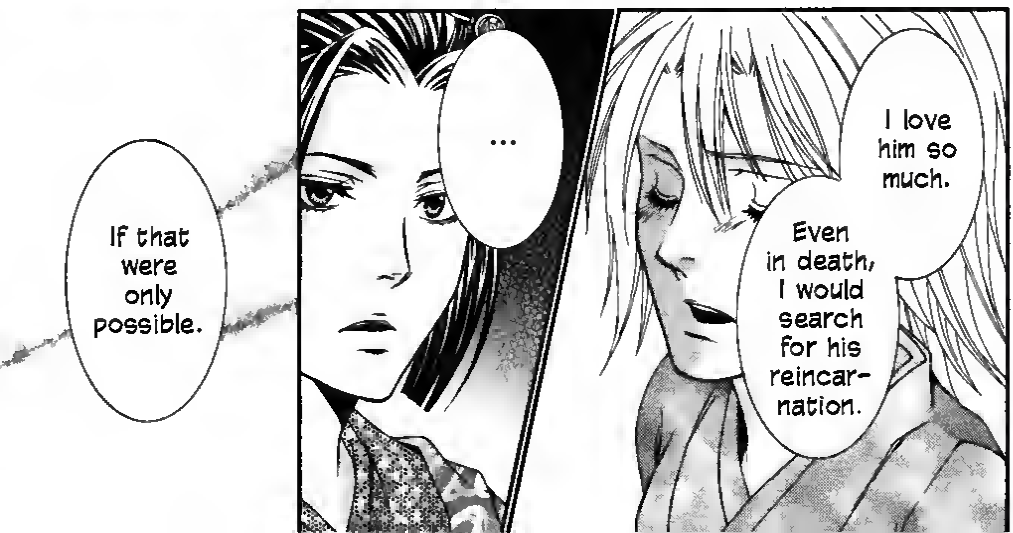

He was a traveling monk.
Young, with straight-forward eyes.
It's medicine. It is very effective against disease.
Since then, that man would appear every so often.
You must be very curious. Does this face disgust you?
...
Disgust me?
Your illness will be cured shortly.
A person's beauty is not judged by their face.
But by *this*. One's heart.
Just as he said, my illness was soon cured.
However, I no longer trusted the two-faced nature of humans.
I wanted to follow him on his pursuit of knowledge while helping the poor and sickly.
It is useless.

HE WAS ALWAYS TROUBLED.
No matter how many I save, there is a limit.
It is too much for me alone. I can only wait for Maitreya.
Mai-treya?
Yes. Beyond that sky.
Maitreya in Tusita Heaven will descend upon this world in 5,600,070,000 years.
I want to help save the people at her side.
There's no way you can live that long.
There is a way to continue living forever.
I am serious.
THAT TIME.
I NOTICED IT FOR THE FIRST TIME.
Is that so?
My feelings for him had turned from those of gratitude to love.
What happened to him?
SHOVE
He's here.
Right here. Right now.

Is he sleeping?
What?
It seems so, doesn't it?
Until 5,600,070,000 years pass, his eyes won't open and his breath is sealed.
That was the training he underwent to meet Maitreya.
PULL
Look ...
...is here.
I know because that person's heart ...
...you are always by his side?
Is it be-cause ...
How do you know all that?

No matter how much time passes, he is the only one I desire.

I HAVE ALSO COME THIS FAR THROUGH MY FEELINGS FOR MANIBE.
I under-stand.
Right.


If that were only possible.
...
I love him so much.
Even in death, I would search for his reincar-nation.

This man's soul will forever remain in this body.
The only one he sees is Maitreya.
No matter how many times I get reincar-nated...
That's why I sometimes think...
...he will still be here! We could never be together!

If I light this body and myself on fire...
...will our souls be reincarnated together?
CLOSES IN
!!
Doing that won't bring you happiness!
KA-THUNK
FIZZLE
...
Happiness?

Why don't I bring you to Hell with us?!
If that were possible, I would already have it!
Is she serious?!
If only we didn't stay at this temple!

I refuse.
クス…
CHUCKLE
Yes. I will light the fire and you will join us.
What?
It was a joke.
WHAT?!
Were you fooled?
There's no way I could do such a thing.
PULL

Then... thanks for your hospitality.
WHAT THE-?!
WHEN WAS IT A JOKE?! WAS THE MONK'S STORY ALSO A LIE?!
Living in this isolated temple makes one bored.
I suppose I went too far. Sorry!
I WAS ALREADY ON BAD TERMS WITH RAI SINCE YESTERDAY.
Hey, Setona.
Wh-
What?
FLINCH?

時遍路

Love Beyond Time

Chapter Two: Memorial for the Dead Part 9

Saying it was because of stress, I went too far.
Though when together, we tend to take unforeseen detours.
MUMBLE
ボソッ
About last night.
I'm sorry.
!
Regardless.
I don't think it's all that bad.
Yup.
Are you listening?
Yes.
Surprisingly.
Is it good?
...eat something like this.
For one, I would never...

Hey, Miss. How about it?
Sorry. This is a tea house.
Sorry, we don't have one.
I heard the inn up ahead went under.
Where can we stay?
Huh?
Excuse me. There is a temple ahead.
They might get played by Ms. Shino, but...
It'll be better than sleeping outside.
RATTLE
Excuse me.
You shouldn't speak such nonsense.
That temple was destroyed many years ago.
What?
Besides the main shrine, everything went up in flames.
It's not a place people can stay.
But...
What about Ms. Shino?
Shino?

That's impossible.
Granny Shino died in the fire that night.
WHAT'S GOING ON?!
Setona, wait!
RUN
RUN

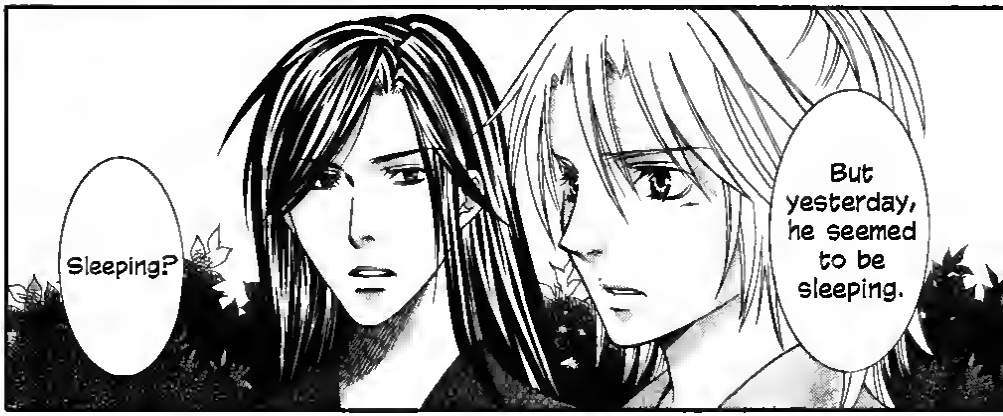
A desolate temple.
It was definitely here.
...
Is that the shrine that survived?
Huh?

WHAT IS THAT?
It is the holy remains of a high Buddhist priest.
Holy remains ...
...of a Buddhist priest?
While alive, he became Buddha incarnate.
To await the far future when Maiteya descends upon our world to save mankind ...
...he underwent intense spiritual training and became like this.
There is a way.
THEN EVERYTHING MS. SHINO SAID WAS...

Then ...
Did Ms. Shino set the fire?
Of course not.
Is this Ms. Shino's hairpin?
Ah. Yes, it is.
I see ...
Ms. Shino said he wasn't dead, so he needed to be cared for.
She carried the priest to safety.
Ms. Shino fearlessly ran back into the blazing temple alone.
It was a forest fire.
She died in the fire while trying to protect it.
Then put a wet cloth over Maitreya's statue ...
I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING ...

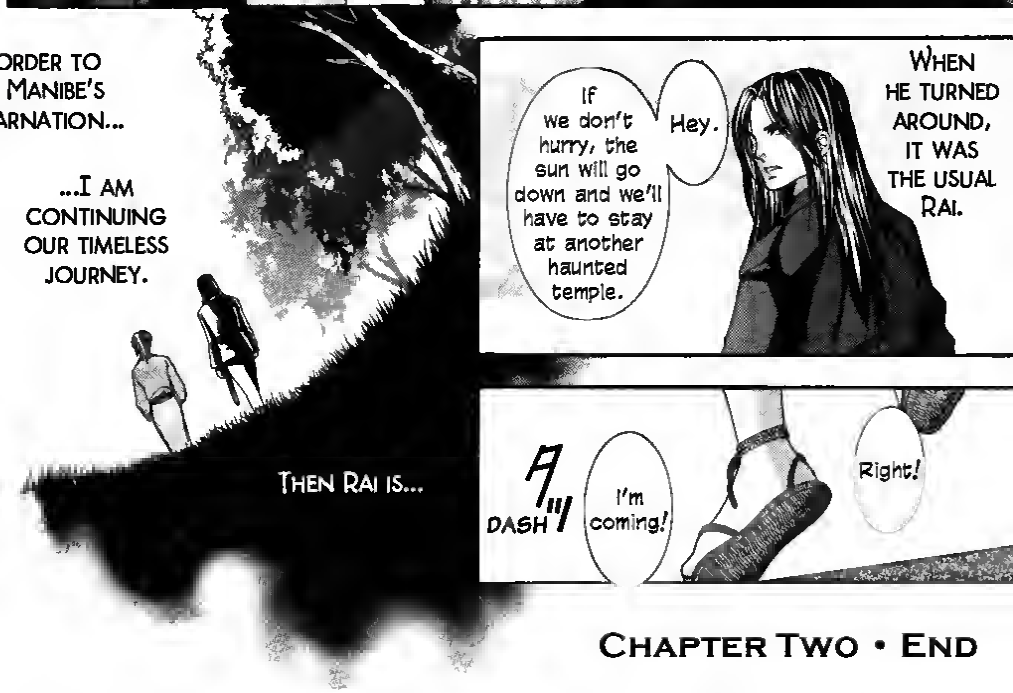
You must think I'm a foolish woman. Far from the flames of Hell, it was the weak flames of love.
Even when I became decrepit and ugly with age, I was by his side.
I felt I heard Shino's voice.
I even saved my rival in love.

Following the spiritual training, an underground stone room is built and a bell rung.
If the sound disappears, it means death. That is, a holy corpse
It's here.
Huh?
It looks like she entered this hole with the priest.
Then, the woman we saw yesterday was a ghost.
Her feelings still linger for the temple and the priest.


Sleeping?
But yesterday, he seemed to be sleeping.

So no matter how much you love someone, it's more important to save the world.
IF ONLY THAT WERE POSSIBLE.
WAS THAT AN ILLUSION? OR WAS IT THE REALITY SHE SAW?
Yeah.

You too, Rai.
In order to protect the village, you stayed in the shrine.
...
I didn't stay there ...
... because I wanted to protect your village.
Huh?
I stayed there as punish-ment.
Punish-ment?
Punish-ment for killing my tribe.
Even now I am killing my tribe.
What ...?
Rai, wait...
Aren't the ones Rai is exterminating the Managatsu-Kami?


In order to find Manibe's reincarnation...
...I am continuing our timeless journey.
Then Rai is...
If we don't hurry, the sun will go down and we'll have to stay at another haunted temple.
Hey.
When he turned around, it was the usual Rai.
Dash!!
I'm coming!
Right!

Chapter Two • End

Information

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Afterword

Thank you so much for reading this far. I've spoken about various things during the Free Talks, but please bear with me a little longer.

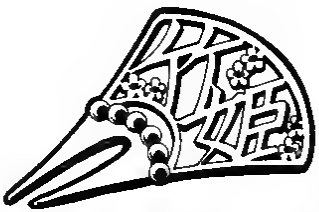
Love Beyond Time was written in 2009. I talked with my assistants on moving onto "digital" next year and started this based on it being the last work I would be doing via "analogue" (drawing with a pen and cutting and pasting the tone on paper). That's why I thought I would try my best to produce a high quality piece with densely drawn pages. I did my utmost in my own way and undertook the task.
It took an immense amount of time.

Digitally, you can sketch via machines which saves time. But those are also technically hand-drawn. Within an overwhelmingly small amount of time, sceneries, small details, anything and everything that needed to be drawn by hand were done with the help of my assistants.

The first volume was up until the story of the country at war. The second volume starts from the Edo period and I tried my best on each page, so please read it. (Self-advertising/laughs.)

I hope you enjoyed it. I would be happy if it touched your hearts even in the slightest. If you care to send me any comments, I'd be dancing with joy.

Then, until the next volume (right? right?) See you then! Thank you very much!



初出　「女性自身」（光文社）2009年5月26日号～9月22日号＜連載作品に大幅加筆訂正＞

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先生へのファンレターは、下記宛先編集部気付「竹姫先生」までお送りください。

無頼コミックス
時遍路　＜上＞

著　者　竹　姫
©chikuhime 2010
発行者　貴志嘉介
発行所　株式会社 松文館
〒171-0014
東京都豊島区池袋2-47-5　池袋オンダビル6F
TEL 03-5951-4647(代表)
郵便振替 00190-2-98863

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印刷・DTP　中央精版印刷株式会社
Printed in Japan